MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY

(University with Potential for Excellence)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

B.A. (ENGLISH)

Third Year

SHAKESPEARE

PAPER - VII

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Model Question Paper

Paper VII – **SHAKESPEARE**

(For those who joined in July 2003 and after)

Time: Three hours Maximum: 100 marks

SECTION A – (50 marks)

1. Annotate FIVE of the following passages choosing at least TWO from each group:

(5 x 4 = 20)

GROUP A

(a) Of moving accidents by flood and field
Of hair-breadth scapes I' the imminent deadly breach

(b) Reputation, reputation, reputation!
O! I have lost my reputation

(c) Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! And when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

(d) I think my wife be honest and think she is not;
I think that thou art just and think thou art not.

(e) Demand me nothing; what you know, you know
From this time forth, I never will speak word

GROUP B

(f) One draught above heat makes him a fool; the second made him; and a third drowns him.

(g) She pined in thought .
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like Patience on a monument.
Smiling at a grief.

(h) Make me a willow cabin at your gate
And call upon my soul within the house,
Write loyal cantons of contemned love
And sing them loud even in the dead of night

(i) I hate ingratitude more in a man
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,

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B.A. THIRD YEAR - PAPER - VII

SHAKESPEARE

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UNIT - I

Othello

Space for Hints

1.1 Introduction

Shakespeare is one of the greatest men of genius that have ever been born on this blighted planet of ours. His freshness is perennial, his appeal is universal. Ben Jonson was right, when he said that he was not of an age, but of all ages, not one country but of all countries. His works are mirrors of beauty, wisdom and truth and hence can never grow stale.

1.2 Unit Objectives

- To know Shakespeare's unique place in the history of English Literature
- To understand his tragic elements
- To analyse his characterization

1.3 Structure

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Unit Objectives

1.3 Structure

1.4 Author Introduction

1.5 Actwise Summary

1.6 Scenewise Summary

1.7 Character of Othello

1.8 Character of Iago

1.9 Character of Cassio

1.10 Character of Roderigo

1.11 Character of Desdemona

1.12 Character of Emilia

1.13 Model Annotations

1.14 Questions

1.15 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.16 Further Reading

.4 Author Introduction

English dramatist and poet (1564 – 1616). Although there are gaps in the biography of Shakespeare – as in the lives of most Elizabethan dramatists – the principle facts about him are clearly established by unimpeachable contemporary

testimony and documents. He was baptized in the parish church of Stratford – on-Avon on April 26, 1564. As his father was a prominent citizen of the town, it is usually assumed that he attended the excellent local grammar school. In 1582 he married Ann Hathaway (eight years older than he).

We do not know just when Shakespeare went to London, nor in what capacity he was first connected with the theatre, although there are unverified and unconvincing legends on both points. Three professional theatres were operating in London, but we know very little of either their business or their offerings until about 1592, which is the year of the first public mention of Shakespeare. At this time he had won enough success as a playwright to provoke a malicious comment from another dramatist, Robert Greene. After this there are many records of his activities as dramatist, and businessman. In addition to turning out a steady stream of plays, he won himself a reputation as a narrative poet with *Venus and Adonis* (1593), a work which was popular enough to go through nine reprinting within a few years. Another narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, appeared a year later. After a few other minor poems, Shakespeare's standing as a lyric poet was established in 1609 by the publication of 154 *Sonnets*, probably written, for the most part, between 1593 and 1598.

In 1594 Shakespeare was one of the organizers of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, a theatrical firm in which he played the triple role of actor, shareholder, and playwright. In 1599 this company built its own theatre, *The Globe*, and when James I came to the throne in 1603, it came directly under the royal patronage and consequently changed his name to *The King's Company* (informally called The King's Men). Various records show that Shakespeare prospered. In 1596 he obtained an official coat-of-arms in his father's name, a grant which allowed him the use of the arms and the title of "Gentleman". In 1597 he bought New Place, one of the finest houses in Stratford; this was the first of a number of purchases of houses and land both in Stratford and in London. Early in 1598, when there was some shortage of food, a survey of stocks showed that Shakespeare had large holdings of grain and malt in Stratford. Later in the same year, Francis Meres published a book entitled *Palladis Tamia* in which he singled Shakespeare out for particular praise as one of the best English writers, and in the course of his commendation he named a dozen of Shakespeare's plays. Other records tell of his receiving legacies from fellow actors and Stratford friends, of his appearing as a witness in lawsuits, of his acting in specific plays, etc. Sometime before the end of his life, probably about 1612, he retired to Stratford. On the 25th March, 1616, he

executed a long and detailed will leaving most of his property to his daughter Susanna, and less than a month later, on April 23, he died.

These facts have been given in some detail - though by no means all of them were mentioned - because many people have the idea that we "know nothing about Shakespeare". The simple fact is that actors and playwrights had a position rather low in the social scale, and their doings were not the matters of public interest that they have since become. Actually, we know a good deal more about Shakespeare than we do about most of his contemporaries in his profession. The numerous attempts to prove that someone else really wrote Shakespeare's plays trade on this relative ignorance and are usually traceable to one or two prejudices. The first is a *confusion of genius with learning* - the 'idea being that a great writer must be a great scholar, a university man, etc. This notion is stimulated by the fact that it now requires learning to interpret some references and allusions which were very unlearned when they were first made. There is no learning in Shakespeare's plays which could not have been readily acquired in Stratford grammar school and in a quarter of a century of busy life and work in Renaissance London. The second prejudice is less creditable and seems to be merely a sort of *social snobbery* which insists on trying to assign the plays to Lord Bacon or the Earl of Oxford or some other titled dignitary. Actually, Shakespeare's authorship of his plays is so well attested that the people who attempt to deprive him, of it are forced to assume that, for some fantastic reason, the whole thing was an elaborate hoax in which Shakespeare collaborated. They use fanatically misplaced ingenuity in an attempt to discredit simple and clearly established facts.

Shakespeare's plays fall into three distinct types - comedies, tragedies, and histories (or chronicle-history plays). The first two require no explanation here beyond the statement that -comic scenes may appear in tragedy and vice versa; but the histories are a special Elizabethan type. The prosperity and rising greatness of England, accentuated by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, led to a popular interest in English history, and the history plays were large-scale dramatizations and glorifications of the events falling roughly between 1200 and 1550. Many of Shakespeare's tragedies -*Julius Caesar*, for example - are based on history, but his "histories" in the special sense can be readily identified by the fact that their titles are all the names of English kings - *Richard II*, *Henry V*, etc. ((Note that *King Lear*, whose hero is a legendary king of Britain, is a tragedy, not a history).

Check Your Progress Questions

Fill in the blanks :

1. Where was Shakespeare born?
2. Shakespeare is the ____ dramatist
3 The three types of his plays are ________

The chronology of Shakespeare's plays presented considerable difficulty, largely because plays were usually not published until some time after they were introduced on the stage. Single plays published during the author's lifetime appeared as *quartos*, and the first collected edition was the *First Folio*, seven years after his death (1623). (*Quarto* and *folio* are terms of the book trade designating the size of the page). The gap between production and publication might be as much as thirty years, or as little as two or three. (Part I of *Henry VI* was first performed in 1592 and first published in 1623.) The evidence used in dating the plays includes records of performance, references in the plays themselves to contemporary events, references to the plays in other writings (the dozen titles listed by Meres, for example), and general considerations of style and versification. Using all these criteria, scholars have constructed a good general chronology of the plays.

Shakespeare began with histories and light comedies in the early 1590's though some plays may go back to the end of the 1580's. To this first period belong *Henry VI* (in three parts), *Richard III, Love's Labor's Lost, The Comedy of Errors,* and *The Taming of the Shrew.* To the middle 90's belong *Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Richard II,* and *The Merchant of Venice.* The last few years of the century saw the production of *Henry IV* (in two parts), As *You Like It, Julius Caesar,* and *Henry V. During the first five or six years* of *the 17th century, Shakespeare* wrote *Hamlet, Twelfth Night,* and *Othello,* and between 1606 and 1609, added *King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra,* and *Coriolanus.* There seems to have been a lull in his activity before the production of his last group of plays, dating from about 1611. *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest,* and *Henry VIII.* This list includes only the better known of the 35 plays (not counting parts separately) that are attributed to Shakespeare.

We can see a definite development in the course of Shakespeare's career. The early plays have an exuberance of *word - play* and *rhyme* not surprising in a young genius learning how to manipulate the tools of his craft. Then his comedy becomes more thoughtful, and his tragedy more the working of human forces and less dependent on an arbitrary fate. In the later tragedies, especially *King Lear*, he achieves a concentration of language and a compression of meaning that sometimes lead to obscurity; and he finally emerges in a serene, philosophical view best exemplified in *The Tempest*.

The circumstances in which Shakespeare wrote his plays are reflected in various aspects of the works themselves. As an actor he had a practical knowledge of stagecraft which meant that he would make his plays good theatre as well as good drama. His own standards were high enough to protect him from mere commercialism, but as a stockholder he naturally wanted plays that would appeal to the general public; he could not afford the snobbery which sometimes assumes that a popular success must be an artistic failure. Because he wrote for his own company, his roles are sometimes conditioned by the strong and weak points of the actors who acted them.

Above all, his plays were written for the Elizabethan theatre, which was very different from the modern one. First of all, it was a small building - the interior of *The Fortune* (built in 1600) was only 55 feet square. This gave an intimacy to the performance which is unattainable now except in arena stagings, and it made asides and soliloquies seem natural. The commercial theatres were open to the sky and the plays were presented by daylight, so that lighting effects were impossible. Costumes were often lavish, but scenery was practically non-existent. As a result, lighting and scenery were often written into the speeches, in references to the sun, moon, and darkness, to forests, castles, and streams. The main stage projected out into the theatre and could not be concealed by a curtain; therefore a scene had to begin with entrances and close with exits, and if bodies were left lying about-as frequently happened - someone had to be instructed to carry them off. This main stage served for open country, city streets and squares, and large rooms, but two other playing areas where also used. At the back of the main stage was a small space which could be closed with curtains. This inner stage was used for small rooms, shops opening on a street, a hovel on the heath (in *King Lear*), the tomb of the Capulets (in *Romeo and Juliet),* and other similar localities Above it was the upper stage, which served for windows above the street, for a hilltop overlooking the battlefield (in *Julius Caesar),* for Juliet's balcony. Any information about the locale of a scene which the audience needed was worked into the dialogue. The absence of scenery and the use of several playing areas meant that the action was unbroken, and this gave a better illusion of reality and a greater sense of speed and concentration than can be achieved in a production which must be constantly held up while elaborate "realistic" scenery is installed or removed. In recent years there has been an increasing tendency to stage Shakespearean plays more or less as was originally intended. Not the least to the advantages of this practice is that the elimination of scene-shifting increases the time available for acting, and there is consequently no need for

drastic cutting of the text.

Shakespeare was recognized in his own time as an eminent writer, and though his plays were often modified and "improved" to suit contemporary taste during the Restoration and the 18th century, his fame has increased fairly steadily. During the period of Neo-Classicism, he was often regarded as something of an inspired barbarian because he did not follow the conventions of classical drama. With the reaction of the Romantic Movement, the worship of Shakespeare may be said to have begun, with Coleridge as the chief prophet of the cult. Shakespeare had already become an international figure under whose banner Lessing, Herder, Goethe and Schiller in Germany and, much later, Hugo in France revolted against Neoclassicism. There is no question that the deification of Shakespeare during the 19th century went too far, and many people even today prefer an attitude of ignorant worship to an informed appreciation of his greatness; but it is both more profitable and more respectful, to read, understand, and perform his works than to speak of him in hushed tones.

Othello: Date 1602 – 4

Principal Characters

Othello	:	A Moor, General in the Venetian army
Desdemona	:	His wife
Cassio	:	His lieutenant
Iago	:	His ancient
Emilia	:	Iago's wife, Desdemona's serving woman
Bianca	:	A whore in love with Cassio
Roderigo	:	A Venetian Gentleman, Iago's dupe, in love with Desdemona
The Duke of Venice		
Brabantio	:	A Venetian senator, Desdemona's father

SCENE Venice and Cyprus

1.5 Actwise Summary

Act-I

In Venice, Iago, who feels slighted at the recent promotion of the nobler-born Cassio as lieutenant, rouses Brabantio with news of his daughter Desdemona's elopement with Iago's commander, Othello. Brabantio tackles Othello with the theft of his daughter, claiming that he must have worked on her

by witchcraft. Their dispute is settled by the Duke of Venice who sanctions the marriage when Desdemona tells him of her love for Othello. The Duke and the Senate have a high regard for both the nobility and military capacity of the Moor, whom they now appoint head of the Venetian army in Cyprus. Desdemona refuses to be parted from her new husband and arranges to follow him to Cyprus under the protection of Iago and his wife Emilia. With them goes Roderigo, who is in love with Desdemona and is being milked financially by Iago: the latter persuades Roderigo that Desdemona's marriage need not put an end to his hopes.

Act -II

A terrible storm of Cyprus has virtually annihilated the Turkish threat (which Othello has arrived to quell) by sinking their boats. Fears for the travellers from Venice, however, are happily confounded as Desdemona and Othello are re-united and welcomed to Cyprus by Cassio, who preceded them. Iago's malice is concentrated at this point against Cassio. Having roused Roderigo against the lieutenant by suggesting that he may be a rival for Desdemona's love, he persuades Cassio, who has been left in charge of the watch by Othello, to drink with him, despite Cassio's plea of a weak head. By wily manoeuvering from Iago, Cassio is brought to strike Roderigo. When Othello is roused by the brawl from what is in effect his wedding night, he dismisses Cassio from the lieutenancy. Iago persuades Cassio to try and gain Desdemona's favour as a step to regaining Othello's; he then reveals to the audience his intention to 'turn her virtue into pitch, / And out of her own goodness make the net/ That shall enmesh them all' (II. iii).

Act -III

While Desdemona is listening to Cassio's pleas for her to intercede with Othello, Iago is beginning to insinuate to the Moor the possibility of his wife's infidelity; doubts are cast on Cassio's honesty, and the looseness of Venetian women is cited. A stroke of luck enables Iago to intensify the attack: Desdemona drops a handkerchief which is picked up by Emilia and passed on to Iago, who then, intending to plant the handkerchief in Cassio's lodgings, torments Othello with stories of Cassio wiping his brow with it and calling out to Desdemona in his sleep. When Othello, who attaches magical properties to the handkerchief, tackles Desdemona with its loss, she unwittingly makes the situation worse by choosing Cassio's dismissal as a subject to distract him.

Act-IV

Iago gives Othello 'proof' of Desdemona's infidelity. Observed by Othello, he draws Cassio into a conversation about a whore, Bianca, who is in love with the lieutenant: Cassio's levity as he talks of her is interpreted by Othello as contempt for his own wife's looseness. The case against Desdemona and Cassio is sealed when Bianca appears with the handkerchief which Cassio has found in his lodgings and asked her to copy. When an embassy arrives from Venice to relieve Othello of his duties and establish Cassio as his successor, Othello strikes his wife before the Venetians. He later treats his wife's bedroom as a brothel, Emilia as the brothelkeeper.

Act-V

Iago incites Roderigo to attack Cassio; both are wounded and in the ensuing confusion, Iago kills Roderigo; who has become more inconvenient than profitable. Othello, convinced now of his wife's infidelity, smothers her in her bed. Her innocence is attested by Emilia, who learns now for the first time that it was the handkerchief which provided the conclusive evidence. Guessing now at the role Iago has played, she tells what she knows and is killed by her husband for her disclosures. In the presence of the visiting Venetians, Othello wounds Iago and kills himself before he can be brought to justice.

1.6 Scenewise Summary

ACT-I

Scene: i

Shakespeare loses no time in giving the exposition of the play. Here it is by means of a conversation between Iago and Roderigo. The delineation of character starts immediately, for it is soon seen that Iago is the stronger character, using Roderigo as a tool or as a "cat's - paw", to pull his chestnuts out of the fire.

The campaign against Othello starts immediately, for Iago is suggesting to Roderigo the reasons why he should hate the Moor. Not, only is Iago a forceful character, but he is exceedingly subtle, and handles the weaker Roderigo with ease. Roderigo has been a successful wooer of Desdemona, while Othello has persuaded her to a secret marriage. This feeling of disappointment in Roderigo is exploited to the utmost by Iago, who knows how to handle a gull.

Tush, never tell me	-	Nonsense, don't tell me.
Three great ones of the cit	-	three dignitaries of the city of Venice.
Oft capp'd	-	showed respect.

bombast circumstance	-	pompous language.
toged consuls	-	officials wearing togas, or long-flowing garments.
Ancient	-	'ensign' or 'Colour-sergent', an army servant whose duty it is to carry the flag.
lin'd their coats	-	feathered their nests, as we would say now.
gennets for germans	-	Small Spanish horses for relatives.
Sagittary	-	the name of the house or inn where Othello and Desdemona are staying.

Scene: ii

Iago goes to Othello, and warns him against Brabantio's coming. But Othello remains unaffected by the fear of Brabantio's revenge. At this stage, Cassio, his lieutenant, followed by certain officers, arrives and informs him that the Duke is in the council - chamber deliberating over the news of the Turkish attack on Cyprus, and requires his immediate presence. As Othello is about to leave for the Duke's council - chamber, Brabantio arrives.

A fight seems imminent between the followers of Othello and those of Brabantio. Brabantio accuses Othello of having seduced his daughter by magic and intends to arrest him. Othello tells him (Brabantio) that the Duke has sent for him (Othello) on some urgent business of the state. Brabantio also goes with him (Othello) to seek immediate redress at the hands of the Duke and his brother Senators.

yerk'd	-	thrust.
out-tongue	-	speak louder than.
circumscription and confine	-	restriction and restraint.
Janus	-	The god with two faces who guarded the gates of Hell: an appropriate oath for the 'two faced' Iago.
land carrack	-	a large treasure ship.
guardage	-	guardianship.

Scene - iii

The Venetian senators are in council when Othello and Brabantio enter. They are comparing notes about the reports of the Turkish preparation and discussing the probable course of the attack. The Duke asks Othello to undertake the war against the Turks, when Brabantio moves the senate to redress first his personal grievances against Othello, the Moor. Brabantio charges Othello with his daughter's abduction by magic art.

Othello is called upon to defend himself. He gives a noble and straightforward account of how love arose between him and Desdemona, as he

related the strange story of his adventurous life before her. He also asks permission that Desdemona herself may be questioned as to his conduct. Desdemona is brought in and she confirms the story and declares her love for Othello with great boldness. Othello is urged to leave that very night for Cyprus. The question arises whether Desdemona should accompany him. Soon it is decided that she will follow Othello to Cyprus under the escort of Iago.

Roderigo, unable to bear the pangs of bitter disappointment, gives himself up to despair. But Iago fools him out of his silver, holds out hopes of success to him, by assuring him that Desdemona would soon see the error of her choice, and asks him to accompany him to Cyprus. Roderigo agrees to be a good second to Iago's scheme of revenge. Iago plots in his mind to poison Othello's mind with suspicions against Cassio being guilty with his (Othello's) wife, and thus to get Cassio's place and to satisfy his revenge.

brace	-	readiness
injoined... Fleet	-	united with a second fleet
servitor	-	servant
th 'imminent..... breach	-	at the very point of death.
bad blame	-	accusation.
lay a sentence	-	speak some words of advice
equivocal	-	capable of being understood in two ways.
light-wing'd toys	-	trivial matters
speculative.. instruments	-	my physical and mental powers
guinea-hen	-	prostitute; a woman of loose character.
smooth dispose	-	cultivated manners.

Act -II

Scene i

In an open place near the quay in a sea-port town in Cyprus, Montano and two gentlemen talk about the tempest and the destruction of the Turkish fleet. Cassio's ship is first to enter the harbour. Iago and Desdemona arrive next.

There is a short interval of painful anxiety when a trumpet announces the arrival of Othello. The next moment Othello himself enters, to the unspeakable joy of Desdemona and his friends. Iago forms his plan of ruining the perfect happiness of Othello and Desdemona. He convinces Roderigo that Cassio, an ideal lady's man has won Desdemona's love and instructs him (Roderigo) to pick up a quarrel with him (Cassio) so that Cassio may break the discipline and be dismissed. Iago makes Roderigo understand that in order to enjoy Desdemona he must remove Cassio first. Thus Iago begins to carry out his plans.

ha'ruffian'd so	has raged so

mortise	-	joints of the ship
like molestation	-	such a disturbance
Enwheel	-	Encircle
gall... patience	-	make you impatient.
chronicle... beer	-	take note of trivial things; keep domestic budget.
Olympus-high	-	as high as Mount Olympus.
act of sport	-	sexual activity.
begin... gorge	-	begin to be sick of it.
I trash	-	I hold in check.
rank garb	-	coarse manners

Scene ii

A public rejoicing is proclaimed in Cyprus to celebrate the providential destruction of the Turkish fleet and Othello's marriage. People are permitted to engage in whatever merriment they like. *Offices* - kitchens (for the supply of food and drink).

Scene iii

Othello charges Cassio to look to the guards so that there may be no excesses committed and no breach of discipline. That night Iago begins his deep-laid plans of mischief. Under colour of loyalty and love to the general (Othello), he entices Cassio to make rather too free with the bottle. When Cassio has got drunk, Roderigo, as previously instructed by Iago provokes him. In the scuffle that follows Montano, the governor of Cyprus, intervenes and is wounded. Roderigo slips away and acting upon the advice of Iago, sounds the alarm.

The alarm-bell ringing awakens Othello, who, dressing in a hurry, comes to the scene of action, and questions Cassio of the cause. Cassio is too much ashamed to reply; and Iago, pretending a great reluctance to accuse Cassio, gives an account of the whole matter in such a manner, as while he seems to make Cassio offenceless, does indeed make it appear greater than it was. Cassio is at once dismissed by Othello who was a strict observer of discipline. Iago asks the repentant Cassio to apply to the lady Desdemona to mediate for him with her lord. Desdemona is of a frank, obliging disposition and will readily undertake a good office of this sort, and set Cassio right again in the general's favour. Cassio believes in Iago as a kind sympathetic friend and consents to his proposal.

full of game	-	given to love-making.
parley of provocation	-	provokes thoughts of love.
potent.... potting	-	expert in drinking.
Almaine	-	German.
a just equinox	-	an exact opposite of.
horologue	-	clock.

mazzard	-	head.
Outran... purpose	-	Ran too fast for me to catch him.
sweeting	-	darling; beloved
cast.... mood	-	dismissed out of anger.
speak parrot	-	talk nonsense.
Hydra	-	in classical mythology the many-headed monster whom Hercules killed.
denotement	-	noting.

Act -III

Scene i

·The morning after the wedding-night, Cassio bids some musicians entertain the newly married couple. The clown enters and sends them away by telling them that Othello does not care for music. Cassio, in obedience to Iago's advice, comes before the day breaks. Iago enters and offers to draw the Moor out of the way so that he may talk with Desdemona without fear of interruption. Cassio gains the ear of Emilia and is led in by her, where he may meet Desdemona.

speaks.... nose	-	smell
quillets	-	quibbles.

Scene ii

Othello dispatches some letters to the Senate in Venice by the pilot, and goes out to inspect the fortifications.

Scene iii

The scene opens in the garden of the castle. Cassio urges his suit to Desdemona, who is easy to be won over in any honest suit. Desdemona gives Cassio the strongest assurance that she will spare no pains to reinstate him in his place. When Othello enters there, apparently led by Iago, Cassio, as being unfit to face the general, slinks away almost unnoticed.

Iago maliciously draws Othello's attention to it, and drop words which, though unheeded at the time begin the work of poisoning Othello's mind. True to her word, Desdemona presses Cassio's suit with feminine vehemence and Othello, out of vexation, promises to do what she asks. When Desdemona has departed, Iago, by subtle and indirect hints, instills in his heart the doubt of Cassio's honesty, and the possibility of Desdemona's inconstancy.

When Othello's curiosity is raised almost to distraction with these hints and scattered words, Iago, as if in earnest care for Othello's peace of mind, asks

him to beware of jealousy. By the very caution which Iago pretends to give Othello against suspicion, this villain raises suspicions in the unguarded Othello. Othello demands proofs from Iago. Then Iago, as if glad that Othello is slow to believe ill of his lady, frankly declares that he had no proof, but begs Othello to observe her behaviour well when Cassio is by; not to be jealous nor too secure neither, for that he (Iago) knows the dispositions of Italian ladies, his country women, better than Othello can do.

Iago also artfully insinuates that Desdemona deceived her father in marrying Othello. Othello is much moved by his argument. If Desdemona has deceived her father, why might she not deceive her husband? The mind of Othello is unhinged; he cannot bear the exquisite agony and asks Iago to retire.

At this stage, Desdemona enters once more and is struck with his agonized looks. Othello complains of headache. Desdemona offers to bind his head with her handkerchief which, being too small, is put aside. The handkerchief drops. When Emilia comes in she picks it up instantly, as Iago has often requested her to steal it. Iago takes the handkerchief from her and proposes to leave it unnoticed in Cassio's chambers to be subsequently used against Desdemona.

Othello enters. He is much changed in appearance and lost in agonized mediation. He is mad for positive proof of Desdemona's guilt, or threatens him to instant death. Iago pretends great indignation, as an injured friend at Othello's words. He tells him (Othello) he heard Cassio speak in a dream of his love affairs with Desdemona. He also adds that he has seen him (Cassio) wipe his beard with a handkerchief very like the one belonging to Desdemona. Othello's mind is made up. He vows the death of Cassio and Desdemona. He appoints Iago his lieutenant who undertakes the murder of Cassio.

breed...... circumstance	-	grow to the point where opportunity is lost.
watch... tame	-	prevent him from sleeping and in this way make him tame.
mammering	-	hesitating.
Chaos.... again	-	Disorder has returned.
filches	-	steals.
Cuckold	-	the husband of a wife who has committed adultery. He was supposed to grow horns on his head.
country disposition	-	inclination of the people of the country.
clime .... degree	-	country, colour and status.
recoiling.... Judgment	-	going back upon her own judgment.

human dealing	-	experience.
Prerogative .... base	-	They are more easily misguided than those of humble birth.
Unshunnable	-	unavoidable.
ta'en out	-	copied.
mines ... sulphur	-	hell fire.
Pioners	-	soldiers of the lowest rank.
plumbed	-	glorious.
trump	-	trumpet.
Dian's	-	of Diana, the Roman Goddess of chastity
supervisor	-	spectator.
topp'd	-	during sexual intercourse.
bolster	-	in bed together.
raging tooth	-	toothache.

Scene iv

Desdemona sends for Cassio before Cassio can come. Othello enters. Othello asks her (Desdemona) about the handkerchief which was his wedding gift to her. As Desdemona cannot give any satisfactory account of how it was lost, she tries to put him off by talking about Cassio. This enrages him all the more and he goes into a fit of fury, and with his suspicions greatly confirmed, he flings himself out of the room. Cassio and Iago come to Desdemona to remind her of her promise to reinstate Cassio in his post.

Desdemona is sorry for her failure, as her lord (Othello) is angry. She asks honest Iago to go to him. She also assures Cassio of her help and goes to seek her lord. Cassio, left alone, is met by Bianca, his mistress, to whom he gives Desdemona's handkerchief, found in his chamber, to have the work copied.

edified	-	enlightened.
catechize	-	question.
crusadoes	-	gold coins stamped with a cross.
sequester	-	restraint.
castigation	-	correction.
Purpos'd...futurity	-	the merit I hope to get in the future.
Blown... ranks	-	blowed up his soliders into pieces.
unhandsome	-	unbecoming.
woman'd	-	subdued; tamed.
circumstanced	-	yielded to circumstances.

Act-IV

Scene i

Iago artfully plays with the anger of Othello. In trying to make light of the whole affair between Cassio and Desdemona Iago, in a devilish manner, rouses the dazed man (Othello) to a greater fury. Iago ends by saying that Cassio has confessed all about his guilty, love for Desdemona. Othello falls into a swoon.

Cassio enters at that moment, but Iago manages to take him away as his whole plot may be ruined if Othello argues with Cassio face to face.

When Othello recovers from the fit, Iago asks him to place himself where he may watch him (Iago) talking with Cassio. Iago so manages it that Othello is misled into thinking that he is getting fresh proofs of the guilty love between Cassio and Desdemona. As Cassio departs, Othello comes out of his hiding, full of murderous thoughts. In the meantime Bianca enters and throws to Cassio the handkerchief, as she suspects it to be a gift to Cassio from a new mistress.

Othello becomes frenzied with passion. In the height of his wrath, he determines to strangle Desdemona in her bed. Iago himself undertakes to dispatch Cassio by night. Lodovico now arrives with letters of the senate of Venice recalling Othello and appointing Cassio as the general.

Desdemona expresses her joy at Cassio's promotion, whereupon Othello strikes her for her supposed shamelessness in rejoicing in his presence at Cassio's good fortune. Lodovico is utterly astonished at this unseemingly outburst of passion on the part of Othello who was reputed to be so calm and dispassionate in his temper.

Convinced... supplied	-	satisfied their lust
Blab	-	boast
Lethargy	-	fit
Great occasion	-	some important matter
Yok'd	-	married
Arch-mock	-	supreme joke
Extasy	-	fit of unconsciousness
conster	-	interpret
customer	-	prostitute
bauble	-	worthless thing
hobby-horse	-	prostitute
messes	-	pieces of meat
Crocodile	-	as false as the tears of a crocodile
Light-brain	-	mad

Scene ii

Othello cross-examines Emilia, his wife's attendant, about his wife's movements and her conduct with, Cassio. Emilia denies the truth of these suspicions but Othello remains unconvinced by her words. He sends for Desdemona; as she enters, he sends Emilia out of the room. Othello's mind, full of horrible fancies, is all confusion. He accuses Desdemona of disloyalty and charges her with adultery. But he is so overpowered by her innocent loveliness, that he breaks forth into an agonized cry. He ends by calling her a whore.

Desdemona and Emilia talk about his strange behaviour. In distress Desdemona sends for Iago and protests her innocence to him. Iago consoles her by saying that Othello has been put into this strange behaviour by state-affairs.

The trumpet announces the supper, and Desdemona, accompanied by Emilia, goes in to receive the Venetian guests. Roderigo now meets Iago and complains of his patience and money both being exhausted. He says that he is every day put off with some plausible excuse. In his desperation, he demands satisfaction from Iago and even threatens him with disclosure. By coaxing and fair promises, Iago once more succeeds in bringing Roderigo round. Iago advises him (Roderigo) to murder Cassio as it is the only means left to detain Othello, and therefore Desdemona, in Cyprus.

Closet....key	-	concealer
Some...function	-	go about your business
cry 'hem'	-	clear your throat as a sign of warning.
garner'd	-	stored
Turn .... complexion	-	turn your fair face.
cherubin	-	angel.
shambles	-	ruined; destroyed; slaughtered.
chid	-	chided, rebuked
Bewhor'd	-	accused of being a whore.
cogging, cozening	-	cheating.
seamy ... without	-	inside out.
conveniency	-	opportunity.

Scene iii

Supper over, Othello and Lodovico take their walk. Othello desires Desdemona to retire for the night and dismisses her attendant. The dark designs of Othello are apparent.

The coming catastrophe casts a shadow upon Desdemona who talks of dying for love. As she undresses for the night, she sings snatches of a pathetic ballad heard in her distant girlhood. Tears rush unbidden to her eyes. Her mind unconsciously runs on her husband's accusation. She discusses with her attendant how impossible it is that a woman can ever be false to her husband. She chooses rather to be wronged than to do wrong in retaliation.

incontinent	-	immediately
barefoot...Palestine	-	made a pilgrimage to Palestine
measures	-	lengths
lawn	-	linen

Act V

Scene i

Roderigo is stationed by Iago behind a house with directions to fall upon

Cassio when he comes back from Bianca's house. When Cassio enters, Roderigo rushes upon him with his sword. Roderigo hits Cassio but Cassio is saved by the armour which he wore under his clothes. Cassio hits back the more effectively and Roderigo falls wounded.

Iago, who was hard by, enters and wounds Cassio in the leg and disappears, appearing subsequently with the others, as if roused by the cry of murder. Iago feigns great sympathy with Cassio, and stabs Roderigo as one of the villains who attacked his dear comrade. Bianca also comes there to complete the party. Cassio is carried away in a chair. Emilia, who has also come, is told to convey the news of the dastardly attempt upon Cassio's life to Othello and Desdemona.

quat	-	pimple
bobb'd	-	swindled.
trash	-	worthless woman, here Bianca.
charge	-	Order

Scene – ii

The scene opens in the bedchamber in the castle. A light is burning. Desdemona is asleep, Othello enters the chamber, full of the black purpose. He is determined to execute the dreadful deed, with the idea that Desdemona's death is a sacrifice which he owes to justice and honour. His love for her is not extinct. He kisses her again and again, which awakens her. He asks her to confess her sins to heaven as this is to be her last moment. He accuses her directly of her supposed guilt with Cassio. Desdemona denies the charge with indignation and asks him to call Cassio to witness. But Othello tells her that Iago has already disposed of him. At this she bursts into tears, which are misconstrued by Othello to express her grief at Cassio's death. She begs for a short respite, but Othello is firm in his resolve and stifles her in her bed.

At this moment, Emilia enters there. She is suddenly startled by a faint moan from Desdemona. She rushes to the bed and finds her mistress in the last gasp of death. Questioned as to how she came to be thus murdered, Desdemona takes the guilt upon herself and expires. Othello, however, openly declares that he murdered her because she was disloyal to him.

Iago and a group of officers enter. Emilia discloses Iago's villainy. Iago strikes his wife (Emilia) dead, and then rushes out for life. But the officers capture him. Papers found in Roderigo's pocket make clear the guilt of Iago and the innocence of Cassio clear beyond all doubt. Cassio now comes to beg pardon

of Othello and to ask wherein he has offended him that he had employed Iago to murder him. All combined, prove to Othello the devilish treachery of Iago. This discovery is as a thunder-stroke to Othello who plainly sees that he is no better than a murderer. He now clearly feels that his wife Desdemona, poor innocent lady, has been ever faithful to him. The extreme anguish of discovery makes Othello's life insupportable.

Othello falls upon his sword and throws himself upon the body of his dear injured wife and dies upon a kiss. Iago is put to the utmost censure of the law in force and is executed with strict tortures. When Othello is dead all his former merits and his valiant deeds are remembered. Word is sent to the state of Venice of the lamentable death of their renowned general.

relume	-	rekindle
forfend	-	forbid
Had stomach	-	had an appetite
yawn...alteration	-	gape as in an earthquake
chrysolite	-	topaz (a precious stone).
reprobation	-	damnation
act...shame	-	adultery
coxcomb	-	idiot
ice-brook'd temper	-	tempered in ice-cold water
Fall'n practice	-	fallen victim to the plots of.
wrought...desire	-	fashioned in accordance with his plot.
Brave me	-	provoke me
Set...down	-	write this down.
Spartan dog	-	vicious animal.

1.7 Character of Othello

Introduction:

Othello, the Moor or Venice, has been simply and grandly built. A great soldier, he has been accustomed from his childhood to wars, sea-voyages and adventures which showed his courage and bravery. Though seemingly violent and passionate, he is majestic and self-composed. He is modest, straight forward, self-possessed and full of dignity. There runs a vein of romanticism in his nature. Frank and generous, he is a man of quick decision and action. Whether he was jealous by nature, remains a disputed question. The tragedy is due to the character of Othello.

A great man and soldier:

A man "who commands like a full soldier," Othello has lived his whole life in camps. From early childhood he has lived a life of adventures and hazards.

For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,

Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used

Their dearest action in the tented field; (Act I sc iii,83-85)

Othello has passed through "the battles, sieges, fortunes":

Of moving accidents by flood and field,

Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach, ...

(Act I, sc. iii, 134-135)

On the battle-field Othello has been considered "all in all sufficient" to take charge of the most hazardous situations.

His generalship:

Othello first appears before us as the general of the Venetian Republic. His pre-eminence as a general is acknowledged by Iago:

For he's embark'd

With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars

Which even now stands in act, for their souls

Another of his fathom they have none

To lead their business. (Act I, Sc.i,150-154)

The duke also holds him in high esteem;

"And though we have there a *substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion,* a *soverign mistress of effects throws* a *more safe voice on you".*

The testimony of a Montano, based on personal and intimate experience, is worth a mention:

For I have serv'd him, and the man commands

Like a full soldier.

His royal ancestory:

Othello himself has simply said

.... I fetch my life and being

From men of royal siege ... (Act I, Sc.ii, 21-22)

Coleridge remarks, "Othello must not be conceived as a negro, but as a high and chivalrous Moorish chief. Can we imagine Shakespeare so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous negro plead royal birth - at a time, too, when negroes were not known except as slaves?"

His simplicity and credulity:

Othello possesses simplicity and unsophisticated innocence. Says Iago:

The Moor is *of* a *free and open nature,*

That thinks men honest that but seem *to be so,*

And will as *tenderly be led by the nose*

As asses are. (Act I, Sc.iii, 193-196)

His honest and good-nature is the cause of his villainy of Iago in the least, and rather remarks:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,

And knows all qualities with a learned spirit

Of human dealings. (Act I, Sc.iii, 255-257)

His modesty and straightforwardness:

Decidedly Othello is modest and what is more, he is straightforward. He does not conceal his love for Desdemona. When Brabantio and his party appears to seize him, he does not conceal himself; on the other hand he says:

Not I; I must be found.

My parts, my title and my perfect soul

Shall manifest me rightly. (Act I, Sc.ii, 31-33)

His self-possession and dignity:

Othello is self-possessed and is noted for his dignified personality. When Brabantio's men raise up their swords against him, he is not frightened. Politely he remarks:

Keep up you bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

and to Brabantio he says very reverently:

Good signior, you shall more command with years than with your weapons. (Act I, Sc.ii, 59-61)

Othello is not easily excited to violence for he is dignified and self-possessed. The more deeply he is stirred, the more calmly and steadily he acts. He is one "whom passion cannot shake."

Even Iago bears testimony to Othello's intrepid calm and balance of mind:

Can he be angry? I have seen the canon,

When it hath blown his ranks into the air,

And like devil from his every arm

Puffd his own brother, and can he be angry?

His frankness and generosity:

Othello is very frank and generous. He is open and trustful. In him,

everything is direct, healthy and objective. He reproduces in transparent diction the truth as revealed to him from without. His mind is like a clear, even mirror which, invisible in itself, gives back the exact shape and colour of whatever stands before it.

Quick in decision and action alike:

Again, Othello is man of quick decision and quick action. Hitch or hesitation: they are foreign to his nature. He knows no indecision. Being self-reliant he decides and acts instantaneously. When in the end, he learns the truth he does not ponder or pause, but decides to kill himself.

His isolation

The figure of Othello stands lonely and isolated. He is of a different race from those in whose midst he lives. He is friendless and alone. He has no one to whom he can turn: none to whom he could unburden his heart. His isolation increases our feeling of tragic pity for him.

There runs a vein of romanticism in his nature:

She loved me for the dangers that I had pass 'd,
And I loved her, that she did pity them. (Act I, Sc.iii, 66-67)

And the crowning glory of Othello's most romantic career is Desdemona. He has the idealists' tendency to exalt what he loves. Othello stakes his life upon the object of his love "My life upon her faith!" says he.

The love which so strangely grows up between the two is the attraction of the like to the unlike. Othello's language in the play is also romantic; he is more poetic and utters more poetical passages than any other single character in Shakespeare, Macbeth not excepted.

His Struggle between love and honour:

In Othello, we find a struggle between love and honour while he never succeeds in destroying his love for Desdemona. "I could not love thee, Dear, so much; loved I not Honour more", these words of Lovelace exactly apply to Othello.

"It is a part of heroism, that as he prefers her to himself, so he prefers honour to her; and he manifestly contemplates her death as a sacrifice due to the religion which he believes her to have mocked and profaned."

Was he jealous?

Whether Othello was jealous or not is a disputed question on which critics

are divided. The best of the critics agree that Othello was not jealous by temperament. At best or at worst it could be said that he was never jealous, he was made jealous.

Walter Raleigh says that "Othello is not a jealous man."

Thomas Campbell is of the opinion that "he is not a jealous man by nature".

Schlegel remarks that "his jealousy is not the jealousy of the heart".

Coleridge does not think there is ever a jealousy in him.

We may here remember Othello's own words in his final speech, where he describes himself as "one not easily jealous, but being wrought perplext'd in the extreme."

The Concluding Remark:

The nature of the Moor is noble, confiding, tender and generous. His nature is all of one piece. "The tragedy of Othello is the tragedy of a free and lordly creature taken in the toils, and writhing to death", says Dowden.

Bradley remarks, "Othello is .... a being essentially large and grand, towering above his fellows, holding a volume of force which in repose ensures pre-eminence without an effort, and in commotion reminds us rather of the fury of the elements than of the tumult of common human passion."

"Othello, like Hamlet," says Walter Raleigh, "suffers from his very virtues, and the noblest qualities of his mind are made the instruments of his crucifixion."

1.8 Character of Iago

Introduction:

"Iago stands supreme among Shakespeare's evil characters", says Bradley, "because the greatest intensity and subtlety of imagination have gone to his making". Hazlitt remarks that "the character of Iago is one of the supererogations of Shakespeare's genius." Iago is the central figure of the play.

A born villain:

Iago is a born villain. He is constantly impelled to injure and destroy all that is good and beautiful. A noble soul like Othello, a spotless girl like Desdemona, an innocent man like Cassio are all a provocation to Iago's own vicious mind. He alone is at the root of all the mischief and mis-chances in the

play. One such person is enough to create an all round confusion and ruin in the play.

His wickedness:

The wickedness of Iago is rooted in his nature. Evil is ingrained in him and must always seek to destroy all that is good. Though only twenty-eight years of age, he is a perfect cynic. He hates Cassio, despises Othello and holds women in contempt. He is not prepared to recognize goodness in human nature.

An incarnation of evil:

Iago is an incarnation of evil. Bradley says that "evil has nowhere else been portrayed with such mastery as in the character of Iago." He delights in evil. And there is not the slightest trace in his mind of any conflict between good and evil. He believes all men to be vicious and all women to be wanton. We find no repentance in him even after the terrible tragedies wrought by himself. Down to the last the evil in him remains intact. Bradley says: "Here Iago is a being who hates good simply because it is good and loves evil purely for itself.

An artist in villainy:

Iago is not merely a born villain but is also an artist in villainy. His keen intellectual pleasure lies in outwitting others. He shows a great skill in playing on people's feelings. He also shows supreme joy in exercising his villainous ability.

His perfect selfishness:

Iago is thoroughly selfish. He makes an open confession of his perfect selfishness in Act. I Scene I. He is one those -

Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them; and when they have lined their coats
Do themselves homage.

A thorough-going hypocrite:

Iago is a thorough-going hypocrite. He makes no secret of it; rather he is plain speaking in expressing it. He says, in the same scene,

For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after,
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve

For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.

His sense of intellectual superiority:

Bradley has rightly remarked that "Iago is a man of supreme intellect who is at the same time supremely wicked". Hazlitt opines that Iago is an extreme instance of "diseased intellectual activity". It is stern ruthless intellect divorced from morality and humanity. His ruin is wrought by the gross abuse and perversion of intellect. Nicoll points out that Iago towers above all the rest with his fertile, acute, and normally far-sighted brain-power.

His 'motiveless malignity'

Coleridge charges Iago of 'motiveless malignity', meaning thereby that Iago does evil simply for the sake of evil and with no other motive.

Dowden also says, "Assuredly the same malignant power that lurks in the eye and that fills with venom the fang of the serpent would seem to have brought into existence Iago."

Bradley does not believe in what Coleridge says. "Iago's action is intelligible; and indeed the popular view contains enough truth to refute this desperate theory."

Walter Raleigh says that, "his main motives are motives of everyday - pride in self, contempt for others, delight in irresponsible power."

Destitute of humanity:

There is little of humanity in him. Bradley says, "Whatever he may once have been, he appears, when we meet him, to be almost destitute of humanity, of sympathetic or social feeling. He shows no trace of affection, and in presence of the most terrible suffering he shows either pleasure or an indifference which, if not complete, is nearly so." He never relents even. Mark his last words in Act V Scene II.

Demand me nothing; what you know, you know:
Form this time forth, I never will speak word.

A liar:

An estimate of his character is made all the more difficult because he is a liar both to himself as well as to others. Even whatever he says in his soliloquies is hard to believe. He is constantly telling lies, and what is worse still, he mixes up lies with half-truths.

Not of gentle birth:

Though we know nothing of Iago's origin, he was certainly not of gentle birth or breeding. There is an unmistakable vulgarity about him. "His talk smells of the barrack and the brothel," it is said. There is no majesty in him; he is a low and cunning beast.

His absolute egotism:

Absolute egotism is the keynote to Iago's character. Himself alone is Iago's universe. He is an embodiment of self love; and to him self-sacrifice is a sin.

His love of power:

Iago's love of power is great. He has therefore a great love for action. We can never imagine him idle or indolent. "Pleasure and action make the hours seem short," he exclaims. He plans his intricate plot carefully, turns every obstacle into an advantage and experiences joy at a tense creation. That is why Hazlitt calls him an amateur of tragedy in real life. Whatever disturbs or wounds Iago's sense of superiority, irritates him at once. He loves to feel that he is supreme; and he is immensely pleased to see others dancing to his tune.

A boon companion:

He assumes the character of a good fellow or boon companion. That is how he draws Cassio into a fit of intemperance. The strength of his hold upon Othello is another pointer. The intimate way in which Roderigo confides everything in him suggests the same trait. We find that Iago is much liked by all. It is because his manners are neither aggressive nor brutal. Othello, Desdemona and Cassio are thoroughly impressed with 'his honesty.'

The concluding remark:

Within certain limits Iago has indeed extra-ordinary penetration, quickness, inventiveness and adaptiveness. He is simply astonishingly clever or simply a consummate master of intrigue. In the most dangerous moments of his plot, he never shows a trace of nervousness. He is keenly sensitive to anything that touches his pride or self esteem. He is an incarnation of envy who regards every one else with enmity as his rival. In Iago Shakespeare has painted a devil in human form.

1.9 Character of Cassio

Introduction:

Cassio has warm, generous feelings, and there is something very lovable about him. He is honest and virtuous with a high sense of honour. He is a man of good looks and winning disposition. There is something boyish and romantic about him. He is a good natured young fellow.

A good-natured fellow:

Cassio is a good-natured young fellow who takes life gaily. He is evidently very attractive and popular. Othello who calls him by his Christian name, is fond of him; Desdemona likes him much; Emilia at once interests herself on his behalf.

His handsome appearance:

Cassio has a handsome appearance, and all the graces of manners and social accomplishments. Iago is envious of his good looks and winning disposition. Yet Iago admits that Cassio is "handsome, young and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after." Cassio is evidently very attractive.

A very good soldier:

Cassio is a man of intrinsic worth and a soldier 'fit to stand by Caesar'. We may well believe him to have been a good soldier who 'shared dangers' with Othello. Iago's description of Cassio is prejudiced and should not mislead us :

One Michael Cassio, a *Florentine -*
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife
That never set a *squadron in the field,*
Nor the division of a battle knows
*More than a spinster (*Act I, Sc.i, 20-24*)*

Such a description of Cassio by Iago is belied by facts. A great general of Othello's calibre has thought Cassio fit for his lieutenantship. Later the Venetian Council appoints him the Governor of Cyprus in place of Othello. Cassio is no weakling but stands with a strong nerve to counterpart Iago's cowardly attack on him.

His love of reputation:

When Cassio is dismissed for his misbehaviour, he does not mind his dismissal but he is extremely grieved for his lost reputation. He says to Iago:

Reputation, reputation, reputation!

O, I have lost my reputation!

I have lost the immortal part of myself,

and what remains is bestial.

My reputation, Iago, my reputation! (Act **II**, Sc.iii, 255-257)

While Cassio is so much particular about his reputation, Iago seems to laugh in his sleeves and says, *"Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving."*

His high sense of honour:

His love of reputation also shows his high sense of honour. When he finds himself disgraced by having been involved in a drunken brawl he exclaims most pathetically.

His hatred of wine:

Cassio bitterly hates the vicious habit of drinking. He says, *"I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment."*

It was Iago who presses him to drink and he drinks. The result becomes a night-brawl and Cassio is dismissed. Then he cries out, *"O thou invisible spirit* of *wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil."*

His warm and generous feelings:

Cassio has warm and generous feelings. He feels very anxious when he finds that Othello has not come safe at port. He is full souled, frank-hearted and generous.

His deep loyalty and affection for Othello:

He has a deep loyalty and affection for Othello. He is genuinely distressed at losing his hero's confidence and esteem. He has an enthusiastic admiration for the General.

His sentiments towards Desdemona amount almost to a religion:

Cassio has a chivalrous adoration for Othello's peerless wife. He has a deep admiration for this 'divine' lady, and never an impure thought has passed in his mind with regard to her. Even when Iago marks his vile insinuations in Act II, Scene III, Cassio only replies, *"She is indeed perfection."* No wonder he was the trusted go-between in Othello's courtship of Desdemona.

He has a young man's natural weaknesses:

But Cassio is no puritan. He has a young man's natural weakness. This is

I Check Your Progress Questions

8 _____ stands supreme among Shakespeare's evil characters.

9.____ is thoroughly selfish in *Othello.*

10.In Iago, Shakespeare has painted a _____ in human form.

indicated by his connexion with Bianca, a woman of more than doubtful reputation. Of Cassio, Iago says:

He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed, to make women false.

He is too-easy-going:

Cassio has another small fault. He is too easy-going. He finds it hard to say 'No'. That is why he 'yields to Iago's persuasions to drink, even though he knows very well that he cannot stand wine and that on that particular night he is charged with responsibilities. Moralizing critics say that he pays for the one offence by losing his post, and for the second by nearly losing his life. But these critics seem to forget Iago's part in these dirty translations.

There is something lovable about him:

There is something very lovable about Cassio. He has fresh, eager feelings. He is distressed at his disgrace and still more at having lost Othello's trust. At the end his sorrow and pity is too acute for words.

The concluding remark:

A fault or weakness apart, Cassio, on the whole, is a very good natured fellow. He is a very good soldier who values his reputation and has a high sense of honour. There is something very lovable about him with his warm and generous feelings.

1.10 Character of Roderigo

Introduction:

Roderigo may be described as a foil to Iago. He has no personality of his own; he merely plays into the hands of Iago. He is an incorrigible fool. There is nothing really wicked or evil about him, but he is empty of virtues.

A mere puppet in the hands of Iago:

Roderigo is a mere puppet in the hands of Iago. Iago makes a tool of him inflaming his passion and persuading him of the frailty of all women. His only motive is to rob Roderigo of his money, for at the end of First Act, we find Iago soliloquizing:

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane
If I would time expend with such a snipe

But for my sport and profit.

His insane longing for Desdemona:

Roderigo is a stupid fellow. He has been seized with an insane longing for Desdemona. Since he could not win Desdemona for his wife, he may get her - Iago persuades him as a mistress and may cuckold Othello. Iago further persuades him to believe that Desdemona is in love with Cassio, and that with the removal of Cassio he will have the fairest chance of gaining Desdemona. It is the reason that he lends his hand at Iago's plot to disgrace Cassio. Iago exploits this idiotic fancy of Roderigo and squeezes out of him all his money and jewels.

He serves as a mirror to reflect Iago's mind:

In the play, Roderigo serves as a mirror to reflect Iago's mind. To him, for whom Iago has no regard or any understanding, he reveals himself freely. To him Iago tells the truth unhesitatingly. If we piece together Iago's observations in his talks with Roderigo, we find a clue to Iago's character. We catch a glimpse of the true Iago through his talks and dealings with Roderigo. With Roderigo alone Iago throws off his disguise and is his own real self.

He is empty of virtues:

It is true that there is nothing really wicked or evil about Roderigo, but he is empty of virtues. The scenes of his gulling provide a sort of a comic relief in the tragedy - only we are always conscious of the tragic clouds hovering over him on account of his association with Iago. His moral sense is as feeble and obscure as his mind is muddled.

An incorrigible fool:

Roderigo is an incorrigible fool. He goes to the devil with his eyes open yet blindly. He takes each step forward most advisedly, admitting his folly as he persists in it. He puts money for Iago in his purse, to follow Desdemona to Cyprus, he will sell all his land, leave himself to the mercy of cruel events. We find his patience and cash exhausted.

His bearing upon the plot:

Roderigo has no particular bearing upon the plot of the play except on two occasions. The first is his drawning Cassio into a quarrel on the night of festivity. The second is his attempted murder of Cassio when he (Cassio) is on his way back from Bianca's house.

Like Emilia, Roderigo is Iago's tool. Like her he dies by Iago's hand. Like her, he contributes something to the ultimate exposure. Shakespeare has created few more contemptible persons.

1.11 Character of Desdemona

Her physical charm:

Desdemona is the daughter of Brabantio, a rich and influential senator of Venice. She is a lady of exceptional physical beauty. Many "curled" gallants of Venice love her and court her. Roderigo also loves her and persists in loving her, despite the repeated refusal of her father. Othello also loves her and he sacrifices his "unhoused free condition", out of his love for her. Even after his mind has been poisoned against her by Iago, his thoughts return again and again to the beauty of her person. Cassio describes her in the most glowing words:

.... he hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens, ... *(Act II, Sc.i, 61-63)*

She is so beautiful that even rocks and sands,

As having a sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

A maiden never bold

Brabantio has great faith in his daughter. He believes that she can do no wrong. He describes her as,

A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blushed at herself; *(Act I, Sc.iii, 95-97)*

Was Brabantio wrong and did he not understand the true nature of his daughter? For, she has boldness enough to elope with a Moor, and in the Duke's council also her behaviour does not show any timidity or lack of self-confidence. She boldly faces the full council, all the senators being strangers to her. She is not shy and her defence of her action in marrying the Moor is creditable. Was she then really so bold and forward? No, Brabantio was right in the estimate of his daughter's nature. The boldness which she displays at this moment is only a

temporary phase. It is the boldness born of love; it deserts her soon after, and in the rest of the play we find that she is really, "The maiden never bold" of Brabantio's description.

Gentle and Passive:

Desdemona in reality is gentle and passive. Bradley calls her the sweetest and most pathetic heroine of Shakespeare. Mrs. Jameson is also of the view that she has less quickness of intellect and less reflection than Shakespeare's other heroines. She is the very embodiment of gentleness. Her gentleness verges on passivity. When wrongs are done to her, she cannot resist or oppose. She can only suffer and suffer terribly. That is why she has been called "a pathetic figure rather than the heroine of a tragedy". She cannot defend herself. She suffers patiently all the insults and brutalities that are done to her by her brutal and beastly husband. He strikes her in the very face of the messengers from Venice, but she merely weeps and suffers without saying or doing anything in her defence. When he orders her to go away she goes out weeping and when he orders her to return she returns obediently. She thus comes very close to the ideal of a *Pativarta* wife. He accuses her of treachery and faithlessness and she returns this evil with good. As she lies on her death bed, she says that she has killed herself and nobody else. In this way even at the last moment she tries to absolve her husband of the charge of murder. She is too helpless and passive, entirely unfit to be the heroine of the tragedy.

Innocent and Tactless:

Her innocence and her tactlessness are childlike. She herself admits that she is a "child to chiding", and can easily be corrected. She is not only ignorant of the wickedness of the world, but also does not believe that any wickedness exists in the world. Owing to her child-like simplicity, she fails to understand the true nature of Iago or the web of villainy that he weaves around her. She does not even imagine that her husband suspects her. She does not think that there are any women in the world who are false to their husbands:

Desdemona: *tell* me ..., *Emilia -*

That there be women do abuse their husbands ...

Emilia: *There be some such, no question.* (Act IV,Sc.iii,57-60)

The remark is an index to her child-like purity and innocence. She is so pure and innocent that she cannot even mention the word *whore.* She asks

pathetically:

Am I that name, Iago? (Act IV, Sc.ii, 116)

To act as one (whore) is impossible for her. She would not do the deed for all the world, and she does not think that Emilia, too, would do it in spite of all her coarse talks. She is tactless like a child. Her innocence makes her tactless.

Her girlish enthusiasm:

She has all the enthusiasm of a girl and speaks and acts on the impulse of the moment. She knows that Cassio is honest and sincere and it is in the interest of her husband that he should be reconciled to him. Therefore, she pleads for him, with all her girlish enthusiasm. In her magnanimity and greatness of heart, she forgets to pause and think whether such pleading is good for her or not. By her insistence she irritates her husband. Her words are often not suited to the occasion and are liable to be misunderstood. For example, when Lodovico arrives with the news of Cassio's promotion and Othello's recall, she enrages her husband by her tackless remarks:

Lodovico: *Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?*

Desdemona: *A most unhappy one: I would do much*
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio. (Act IV, Sc. I)

Othello naturally misunderstands her and is furious. She speaks just like a child. Her innocence leads to her undoing.

Unfortunate and Pathetic:

The word "Desdemona" literally means unfortunate and Desdemona is really unfortune. Mrs. Jameson writes in this connection, "The source of the pathos throughout - of that pathos which at once softens and deepens the tragic effect, lies in the character of Desdemona. No woman, differently constituted, could have excited the same intense and painful compassion without losing something of that exalted charm which invests her from beginning to end. Her marriage with Othello takes place in dubious circumstances. They could not live together long enough to understand each other. It is possible if she had remained in Venice where protection from her relatives and friends was possible, she would not have met such a sorry end. As it is, she is uprooted from her homeland, taken to Cyprus where she is entirely at the mercy of her rash and credulous husband. She suffers and she suffers intensely for no fault of hers. She evokes our pity and sympathy as no other heroine of Shakespeare does.

John Drakakis on "The character of Desdemona"

Desdemona is altogether more simply drawn. She does embody the principle of 'good' in the play, but Shakespeare takes care to provide her with certain human touches which fill out her character. She is probably younger than Othello, although Brabantio's early references to her as 'O unhappy girl' and 'a maid, so tender, fair, and happy' do not indicate that she is less than adult.

Despite Iago's' insinuations, and Othello's later attacks upon her, she remains the most consistent character in the play, although the ambiguous circumstances of her marriage do open her actions to the possibility of misinterpretation. Brabantio initially thinks of her as a victim of Othello's magic charms, and, of course, Iago sees her simply as a passive animal, dominated by a more forceful one: 'an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe'. But when Desdemona does appear to speak for herself, we are immediately aware of a woman, mature in judgment, perceptive and in full control of her faculties. She outlines her 'duty' both to her father and to her husband and she is clear and positive about her reasons for having decided to marry Othello. We are impressed, too, by the faith she inspires in her husband, who responds to Brabantio's churlish allegation that she may be more deceitful than Othello realizes, with the comment; 'My life upon her faith!' We should note in passing that this line, completed with the addition "honest Iago", also points forward to the fate which awaits both her and Othello, since it will be her husband's faith that Iago will undermine. But at this point in the play we cannot fail to admire the clearness and honesty of Desdemona's character.

As with Othello, there are two viewpoints to consider. The public demonstration of Desdemona's virtues is balanced by a more covert undermining of them as Iago undertakes to instruct Roderigo in what he claims are the habits of Venetian women. (He does the same later to Othello). Desdemona's love is reduced to 'merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will' and therefore cannot last: "When she is sated with his (Othello's) body, she will find the error of her choice". Throughout and particularly in Acts III and IV, Iago emphasies the discrepancy between Desdemona's physical beauty, and the corruptness of her soul, and he seeks to persuade Othello that the deceit she practices is somehow typical.

When Iago advances this kind of argument to Desdemona herself, she

rejects it as a collection of 'old paradoxes, to make fools laugh in the alehouse, just as she responds later to Emilia's awareness of the sordid ways of the world. 'Beshrew me; if I would do such a wrong. / For the whole world.' It could be argued that Desdemona's innocence is simply too good to be true, a naivety which has no place in either Cyprus or Venice. But we must remember that more than any other character in the play, she has a thorough knowledge of 'goodness' although Shakespeare takes pains to make it plausibly human in its appearance. For example, her elopement we have already mentioned, but notice her concern as she waits for Othello's arrival in Cyprus, particularly when she tries to disguise her own anxiety:

I am not merry, but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise. (Act II, Sc.i, 122-123)

Of course, like her elopement, this comment has a sinister ring to it, and it helps to make Othello's own fall more plausible, but at this point it enables us to engage with the thoughts and feelings of Desdemona as a caring human being, as well as savour the irony of her position. Similarly, later, in a scene of considerable tension and foreboding, we become aware, through her singing of the 'willow' song, of the intensity of her feelings. Here if anywhere, Desdemona's view of the world could change, since her confidence in human relationships has been shattered; but even after the discussion with Emilia, and her questions about human behaviour, her prayers are finally directed towards eliminating evil, rather than participating in it:

Good night, good night: God me such usage send
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend! (Act IV, Sc.iii, 103-104)

There is a sense in which Desdemona is intrinsically incorruptible, although her doubts go some way towards humanizing her character. Also, her actions are shown to be extremely vulnerable. Iago illustrates this in his conversation with Cassio just before the lieutenant falls from favour; but the latter continues to assert Desdemona's qualities in the face of a cynical attempt to undermine them. For Cassio she remains "a most exquisite lady", "a most fresh and delicate creature" whose speech is the model of 'perfection'. But to one already corrupted, these claims have no force, and hence she is made to seem naive in her subsequent pleading for Cassio.

There is, of course, a sense in which all good; in the play seems naive in

the face of Iago's cynical and reductive outlook. The point is that Desdemona's openness is made to seem tackless, and in a curious way childish, in a situation in which it is a quality no longer to be valued. She preserves her integrity for us with her request to Cassio to 'Stay and hear me speak', and even her excuse for not being able to produce her handkerchief cannot, except in a reduced context, be considered as a deceit. These are all examples of Shakespeare's ability to individualise her character, while at the same time not losing sight of the values she represents within the wider framework of the play. In a number of ways Desdemona is a yardstick by which we can measure the extent of Othello's transformation. From a language they both share in the early part of the play (Iago says privately: 'O, you are well tun'd now'), Othello sinks to a position where Desdemona can no longer understand him: "I understand a fury in your words. But not the words." Perhaps the final evidence for her consistent devotion comes when at the point of death, she takes on herself the full blame for the 'deed': "Nobody - I myself - farewell."

1.12 Character of Emilia

Her crucial role:

Emilia is only a secondary character in the play, but her role is a crucial one. As John Drakakis rightly points out, "though she is the wife of Iago, she is ignorant of the real nature of his plots, and she even aids his design without any awareness of their consequences. For example, she is asked to persuade Desdemona to plead for Cassio's reinstatement and she gives Iago the handkerchief which will play so large a part in convincing Othello of his wife's guilt. Shakespeare portrays Emilia in a realistic light, attributing to her (as with Cassio) strengths and weaknesses, combining in her character qualities of loyalty and service, with a commitment also to the more worldly side of human nature. Iago dismisses her as a typical woman, chiding, licentious, and deceitful; but she responds firmly to his criticism with a statement which echoes throughout the remainder of the play: *"You ha' little cause to say so"*. Emilia tolerates her husband's cynicism and recognizes it for what it is, but she does not suspect Iago of outright evil. Also, she observes and comments upon the generalized patterns of human behaviour against which the relationship of Othello and Desdemona might, as it changes, be measured:

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.

They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;

They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,

They belch us... (Act III, Sc.iv, 100-102)

A foil to Desdemona:

Emilia is a woman of the world and her understanding of the real nature of men and their affairs is more realistic and mature than that of Desdemona. In this respect, she serves as a foil to throw into sharp relief the child - like nature of her mistress. While Desdemona thinks that there are no women in the world who would play false to their husbands, Emilia knows that there are many such:

Yes, a *dozen; and as many* to *the vantage as would store the world they played for.* (Act IV, Sc.iii, 83-84)

As soon as she observes the rude behaviour of Othello towards Desdemona, she at once feels that he is jealous. She also suspects, and rightly, that it must all be the doing of some villain:

I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,

Some busy and insinuating rogue,

Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some *office,*

Have not devised that slander. (Act IV, Sc.ii, 128-132)

She would not like that any mercy be shown to such a rogue. She prays that severest punishment be meted out to him:

A halter pardon him, and hell gnaw his bones!

Emilia is vulgar and immodest in her thought and speech. While Desdemona cannot even utter the word "whore";' Emilia repeats it without any sense of shame. She talks of the scandal of her relations with the Moor, without any hesitation, in the presence of others:

O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was

That turned your wit the seamy side without

And made you to suspect me with the Moor. (Act IV, Sc.ii, 145-147)

Her views on morality and chastity are rather lax. In reply to Desdemona's question, "wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world", she replies "Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but for the whole world! why, who would not make her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I

Check Your Progress Questions

11. ____ acts as a foil to Iago.

12 ____ is a foil to Desdemona.

should venture purgatory for it", and adds: 'Why, the wrong is but a wrong in the world: and having the world for your labour, it is a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right." (Act IV. Sc. iii. 71 – 81)

Bold and Fearless:

Besides being a woman of the world, she is also bold and fearless and in this respect too, she is contrasted with Desdemona, who is timid and passive. Her boldness and fearlessness are shown to full advantage when finding her mistress dead, she stands up boldly in her defence. She has nothing to gain by defending her, but still she does so at the cost of her life. Othello threatens her but she remains unafraid of his sword. Iago orders her to keep silent and go home, but she refuses to do so. She speaks out nobly and fearlessly and ultimately reveals the full villainy of her husband. She falls a martyr to the cause of truth and justice and we may rightly say of her, "nothing in her life became her so much as the loosing of it."

Her Stupidity:

However, it has been rightly said the Emilia in the early Acts of the play sets our teeth on edge with anger and resentment. She knew the secret of the handkerchief, she had given it to Iago and Iago had given it to Cassio. She also knew that the handkerchief was the cause of Othello's jealousy and he had quarrelled with his mistress only because she was unable to produce it. She could have revealed the whole truth and thus saved her mistress; but she does not do so. She keeps completely silent as if she knew nothing. Why did she do so? The fact is that she is an illiterate lady and is entirely lacking in imagination. She failed to see through her husband and she failed to connect the handkerchief with the jealousy and the rage of Othello. A.C. Bradley rightly considers that it was stupidity which kept her silent. However in the last Act of the play, she rises to heroic heights. Here she does readily win our admiration. Desdemona's "A guiltless death I die" is balanced by the truthful nature of Emilia's dying statement."

So come my soul to bliss, as *I speak true;*
So speaking as *I think, I die, I die.* (Act V, Sc.ii, 248-249)

1.13 Model Annotations:

i. *Forsooth, a great arithmetician,*

One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,
Is all his soldiership. (Act I Scene i-Lines 18-26)

This is how Iago describes Cassio in the beginning of Act, I Scene I. Othello has appointed Cassio his lieutenant. Iago feels aggrieved. He tells Roderigo that this is the reason why he hates the Moor.

Cassio is a native of Florence. He is deprived of practical knowledge of leading an army into any battle field. He is a fellow who was on the point of marrying a fair woman, Bianca, to his eternal damnation. He never commanded any army in the field. He does not know how to draw up troops in battle any more than an old maid. He may have knowledge of military science from books and he can talk as wisely as counsellors. All his soldiership consists of mere idle talk. He has no actual military experience.

ii. *Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it*
Without a prompter. (Act I, Sc.ii. 83 – 84)

Soon after his marriage, Othello is summoned to attend a meeting of the Senate. On the way, Brabantio and his followers meet him and challenge him to a fight. Othello calmly declines the challenge, and asks all people to sheathe their swords. Then he explains that, as an experienced soldier, he knows when to fight and when not to. If the occasion really demanded fighting, he would have begun it without any challenge at all.

Othello makes use of a metaphor from the stage to give point to his declaration. Actors, while on the stage, are guided by cues and helped by prompters. By the 'cue' is meant the last portion of an actor's speech, serving as a hint to the next speakers. The 'prompter' is generally stationed in one of the wings of the stage, and he assists the actors to remember the speeches by whispering soft this when they are nearby. Othello compares himself to an expert actor, who has no need of any assistance from a prompter like Brabantio. He knows his cues

perfectly well.

This metaphor from the practice of the stage would have naturally come to one like Shakespeare, who was both a playwright and an actor. It does seem somewhat out at character in Othello, who has led the rough life of a solider and is unacquainted with the recreations of fashionable society.

iii. *His bark is stoutly timbered, and his pilot*
Of very expert and approved allowance;
Therefore my *hopes, not surfeited to death,*
Stand in bold cure, (Act II, Sc.i, 48-51)

Cassio, immediately after his arrival at Cyprus in stormy weather, is asked by the Governor Montano, whether Othello's ship is strong enough to overcome the storm. Cassio answers that the ship is made of strong timber. Moreover, its pilot is a skilful man. It would therefore be reasonable to hope for Othello's safe arrival.

Cassio's use of a figure from physical states of health and disease, has led to agree deal of dispute about the true meaning of the passage. It is a well-known fact of experience the over-indulgence leads to ill-health and death. Cassio declares that his hopes are not at all over indulged; they are by no means surfeited to death. Consequently, they are almost certain to be realized. The hopes are not in a state of disease, but in one of radiant health ('bold cure').

iv. *If after every tempest come such calms,*
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate. (Act II, Sc.i, 179-187)

These words are spoken by Othello soon after his arrival in Cyprus. He is extreme happy to find his wife who has arrived there earlier than him.

During the course of his voyage, Othello had to pass through a

tempestuous storm raging on the sea. But he is happy now as after the tempest he has met his beloved wife, Desdemona. If such a happiness is achieved after every storm, then let the winds blow till they have awakened the dead out of their graves.

His struggling ship may be thrown up the crest of sea as high as mount Olympus. The ship may be thrown as low as is the hell from heaven. Yet Othello will hail the storm provided it ends in the happy union with his beloved. He is extremely happy at the moment. If he were to die now, it would be the happiest moment for him to die. His soul having such an extreme happiness that another occasion of such excessive joy is not likely to follow in the unknown future.

v. *It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock*
The meat it feeds on. (Act. III, Sc.iii, 167 -168)

In the 'temptation scene', Iago rouses Othello's suspicions about Cassio, without making any definite accusations. When Othello presses him, he speaks vaguely about the value of reputation. Finally, he warns Othello against jealousy.

He describes jealousy as a green-eyed monster, which mocks what becomes its food. The persons who become subject to jealousy are, as it were, its food. It devours them, after mocking them and playing with their feelings.

No particular monster seems to be referred to here. Jealousy is appropriately enough described as a monster, because it destroys people.

We have interpreted 'meat' above as the victim, and in that sense the food of jealousy. Steevens suggested that it should signify the person who is suspected. Jealousy then would stand for the jealous person, who suspects. In this case, Othello would be 'jealousy' and Desdemona the 'meat' he feeds on. Jealousy may be said to mock the meat it feeds on: for, the jealous person continues to sport with the lady he suspects, until he is sure of her guilt.

Theobald suggested that 'mock' should be emended into 'make'. The sense then would be that jealousy is a self-generated passion and grows by what it feeds on. The emendation, though attractive, is unnecessary, since the text, as it stands, yields good sense.

vi. *Why, this is not a boon;*
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,

Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight
And fearful to be granted. (Act III, Sc.iii, 76-83)

This is how Desdemona is pleading for Cassio's case with her husband. Desdemona is not asking for a great favour from Othello. She is begging for a boon from him. It is just an ordinary request. It is, as it were, to request him to put on his gloves to protect himself from cold. It is like asking him to eat nutritious food to be in good health. It is like praying him to keep himself warm in cold weather. It is reminding him to do a thing for his own personal benefit. All these things are for his own good. In the same manner her request for the restoration of Cassio is also of a similar character.

But when Desdemona requests Othello to do something as a test of his love for her, it will not be so easy for him to grant it. He will have to consider and weigh her words carefully before her personal request would be granted by him. Such a request will be of importance and a heavy burden.

vii. *O, it comes o'er my memory,*
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all ! – he had my handkerchief. (Act IV, Sc.i, 20 – 22)

Desdemona's handkerchief plays an important part in Iago's case against her. When first planting seeds of suspicion in Othello's mind, he invents and tells the story of Cassio wiping his beard with Desdemona's handkerchief. Later, to confirm Othello's jealousy, he professes to make light of all the evidence he has gathered. Desdemona may still remain chaste, even though she seemed to make love to Cassio. And if she presents Cassio with her handkerchief, why should Othello worry about it? Once Othello has presented the handkerchief to her, it becomes her property, and she can do what she likes with it.

Reminded of the handkerchief, Othello cannot endure the thought of Cassio using it. The very notion seems to him to be a bad omen, like the appearance of a raven over a house in which somebody is ill with plague. Just as the raven would forebode the death of the patient, the handkerchief in the hands of Cassio seems to him to foretell an unhappy future for him.

viii. *I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,*
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander. (Act IV, Sc.ii, 12-18)

These words are spoken by Emilia to Othello in Act IV, Scene II of Shakespeare's *Othello.*

Othello feels certain that his wife is false to him. Emilia tries to drive out such an abnoxious thought from his mind. She says that she is prepared to stake her soul that Desdemona is honest. If the Moor thinks otherwise, he should remove that thought from his mind. It deceives his soul. He should drive out all thoughts of Desdemona's unchastity from his mind. Such thoughts will pollute his mind.

If any villain has put such an idea into Othello's brain, let the gods punish him for it with the curse of a serpent's mortal bite. If Desdemona is not honest. chaste and faithful, then man may, in the world be happy. If that is so, then no woman in the world can be chaste. If that is the case, then no man can get happiness in his married life. If Desdemona be impure, then all other wives are as foul as slander (foul report) can ever make out a woman to be.

ix. *...this sorrow's heavenly;*
It stikes where it doth love (Act V, Sc. ii. 21 – 22)

In the last scene of the play, Othello enters the bedroom of Desdemona to kill her. A look at the sleeping form makes him realize how distasteful the work he has undertaken is. He tries to steel his heart against relenting by thinking of her sin. Yet he cannot forbear kissing her. Tears come unbidden to his eyes, and he is overwhelmed by sorrow at the deed he is going to commit.

Though the tears are evoked by his cruel purpose, he feels sorrow to be heavenly. He is an instrument of justice, punishing sin in one whom he loves. An overmastering sense of justice alone can urge him on to kill his beloved

Desdemona for the sake of honour and righteousness.

This sorrow's heavenly: the obvious meaning is that Othello's tears are evoked by his determination to uphold the divine cause of justice by killing Desdemona, whom he still loves. Dr. Johnson, however, interprets: "This tenderness with which I lament the punishment justice compels me to inflict, is a holy passion."

x ......*of one whose hand*
Like the base Indian threw a pearl away,-
Richer than all his tribe. (Act V, Sc.ii, 346-348)

Just before committing suicide, Othello tries to justify his life and conduct in a brief, but moving speech. He refers to his being deceived by Iago. He compares himself to a barbarous Indian, who threw away a priceless pearl without realizing its value. This refers, of course, to his killing Desdemona, without realizing her goodness and love for him.

The base Indian: Thus the Quartos. The first Folio, however, has 'Judean' for 'Indian' Controversy has raged round the relative merits of the two readings. If we take 'Indian', the reference is undoubtedly to the Red Indians of America, who were ignorant of the value of precious stones. Desdemona is the precious jewel that Othello threw away. The reading 'Judean' has been found attractive by many editors. Some see in it a reference to the story of Herod, King of Judea, casting away his wife, Marian. Halliwell Phillips first suggested that the reference might be to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ, the pearl without price.

His tribe: either the tribe of Jews or Indians (as the case may be) or its own class. In the latter case, what is meant is that the pearl thrown away is the most valuable of its class.

1.14 Questions

1. Write an essay on *Othello* as a love tragedy.
2. Is Iago Shakespeare's achievement in the art of villainy?
3. Write an essay on *Othello* as a Shakespearean tragedy.
4. "Desdemona is a sacrificial victim in the play" - Discuss.
5. Write an essay on *Othello* as a tragedy of racial gaps.

1.15 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. Stratford-on-Avon. 2. Elizabethan 3. Comedies, tragedies, histories
4. Othello's 5. romanticism 6. love and honour. 7. was made
8. Iago 9. Iago 10. devil 11. Roderigo. 12 Emilia

1.16 Further Reading

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Unit – 2

Twelfth Night

Space for Hints

2.1. Introduction

Shakespeare often used stories with which his audience were already familiar at least in a general way. So many of his plots are not original. But that he improved upon them goes without saying. He would re-tell the story to make it more dramatic, invent or re-create characters and add new incidents filling out small parts etc. so that the most familiar story appears new and unfamiliar. *Twelfth Night* is no exception to this general method.

2.2. Objectives

- To make the students understand the elements of Romantic comedy
- To make the students assess Shakespeare's contribution to English Literature

2.3. Structure

21. Introduction

2.2. Objectives

2.3. Structure

2.4. Source

2.5. Date of Composition and Publication

2.6. The Title of the Play

2.7. Story of the Play in Brief

2.8. Actwise Summary

2.9. As a Romantic Comedy

2.10 Character of Duke Orsino

2.11 Character of Malvolio

2.12 Character of Viola

2.13 Character of Countess Olivia

2.14 Character of Feste, the Clown

2.15 Character of Sir Toby Belch

2.16 Character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek

2.17 Character of Maria

2.18 Questions

2.19 Key for Check Your Progress

2.20 Further Reading

2.4. Source

The main plot of *Twelfth Night* involving Viola, Sebastian, Olivia and Orsino is taken from Barnabe Riche's novel of *Apolonius and Silla* which is one of a collection of eight tales called *Riche, His Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581). This, in turn, is taken from the *Novelle* (1534) of the Italian storyteller, Bandello. Viola's resemblance to Sebastian, her determination to serve Orsino in the guise of a page and her falling in love with him, her irresistible charm which draws Olivia's attention while she pleads Orsino's cause, Olivia's engagement to Sebastian mistaking him for Cesario all these have their parallels in Riche's novel. But Shakespeare has modified them and improved on them in order to make the plot more effective for drama.

Another probable source of the play is an anonymous Italian play *Gl' Ingannati* ('The Cheated') (1531). The plot in this play resembles *Twelfth Night* in its essentials and in its introduction occur the name Malevolti which is suggestive of Malvolio the steward and Fabio, the name of one of the characters, which brings to our mind Fabian, Olivia's servant in Shakespeare's play.

A third source of the play is again an Italian play Gl' Ingannii ('The Cheats') 1592 written by Curzio Gonzage. This play is noticeable for the sole reason that the sister who disguises herself in a man's attire (which leads to her being mistaken for her brother) assumes the name Caesare which is suggestive of Cesario in *Twelfth Night.* The names Olivia and Violetta occur in a prose romance *Famous History of Parismus* (1598) by Emmanuel Forde.

Of the under-plot it may safely be said that "It is all so far as is known, Shakespeare's own invention." But it has been suggested that an anecdote about Sir William Knollys, Comptroller of the Royal Household, might have given a hint for the character of Malvolio ("The comptroller frowned upon noisy revelers at court, and on one occasion, when the Maids of Honour were 'frisking' in their room late at night he tried to shame and frighten them into silence") The minor character of the under-plot are modifications of their prototypes in Shakespeare's earlier plays. They are easily recognizable:

Sir Toby	- Falstaff (*Henry IV*)
Sir Andrew	- Slender (*Merry Wives of Windsor*)
Maria	- Nerissa (*The Merchant of Venice*)
Feste	- Touchstone (*As You Like It*)

Further, Shakespeare in this play makes use of situations which he had used in some of his earlier plays, such as, a young maiden in disguise following faithfully her beloved (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) and confusion arising out of mistaken identity of twins (*The Comedy of Errors*).

Shakespeare might be indebted to these sources for the success of his plays. But the pulsation life of this comedy, the perfect harmony of poetry, romance, humour, the interweaving of serious and comic plots and most of all, the unique individual personality of each character in the play -- these are Shakespeare's own inventions.

2.5. Date of Composition and the Publication

Scholars with the help of both internal and external evidences have come to the conclusion that *Twelfth Night* was composed probably between 1600 and 1601, and first published in 1623 in the first Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays.

2.6. The Title of the Play

The play has two titles *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*. The first title is more familiar and popular perhaps because it embodies the festive spirit of the Twelfth Night Celebrations.

The festival of Twelfth Night was originally ordained in commemoration of the appearance of the Magi, the three wise men who carne from the East to worship Christ, the Messiah, born on December 25. From the time of the middle Ages, the Twelfth Night festivities were marked among other things by the performance of plays. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and James I, the celebrations were observed with great ostentation and ceremony in the Universities, and at the court. Many plays were written to be performed for the amusement of the court on this night and it is supposed that Shakespeare's play was written with the same object. It is probable that *Twelfth Night* was performed at the court of Queen Elizabeth on 6th January 1602 and so the play was given the name of the festival itself.

Twelfth Night was traditionally a feast of mirth in Christian countries, a revel in which children took part as audience or actors. The whole game was topsy-turvy under a Lord of Misrule. It is this spirit of 'high revels' that is recaptured in the play. Another custom associated with the festival was the

division of the "Twelfth Cake" by lots and the election of a king and queen for the day by means of beans and peas. It is possible that Shakespeare's play in which fortune plays so large a part in choice and union of young lovers obtained its character and its name from this ancient custom.

The alternative title *what you will* is a piece of Shakespeare's gaiety. According to S.Brooke "the play is a varied picture of human nature ranging from the highest to the lowest rank, from the wisest to the most foolish - a delightful broken landscape of the world of men and women full of love and laughter, fancy and imagination. You may take out what you will, wander in it where you will. Shakespeare wrote it for his pleasure in humanity and for your pleasure. When he had finished, he was pleased. He had fulfilled his will. Then he smiled to himself and said "It's minc no longer, I give it to the audience: let them have their will". Therefore the play was given this alternative title in the same spirit as *As you like it*. Shakespeare merely wished to say "if the first title does not meet with approval then call my play what you will, by any title you please". Sometimes taking Shakespeare at his word *Twelfth Night* was often known as Malvolio and Charles I in his copy of the second edition altered the title to "Malvolio - A Tragedy" Verity explains that the title '*what you will*' seems to refer to the character or the nature of the piece. "It is a combination of comedy and romance, touched in the love scenes with a sentiment that becomes serious if not tragic". Shakespeare anticipating objections that the play belongs to no particular type of drama was prepared to answer by saying "call it comedy or romance or what you will".

2.7 Story of the Play in Brief:

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, is in love with Olivia, a rich Countess. But Olivia does not return his love. She is grief - stricken because of the recent death of her brother whose memory she decides to honour and preserve by spending seven years in mourning. She refuses to pay heed to Orsino's offer of love. To present his cause and to plead with Olivia on his behalf he sends Cesario, his favourite page, who has taken service under him quite recently. But Orsino does not know that Cesario is really Viola, a ship – wrecked young woman, in disguise. Viola has already fallen in love with the Duke. Yet she decides to do her best to win Olivia for Orsino. But Olivia refuses to entertain the offer of love of any man, not even the Duke's. She can admire, but cannot love Orsino. However, things take an

> **I Check Your Progress Questions**
>
> 1.*Twelfth Night* is taken from Barnebe Riche's ____
>
> 2 What is the another title of the play?
>
> 3.*Twelfth Night* is a combination of ____

unexpected turn when Cesario with his youthful charms pleads for Orsino and Olivia falls passionately in love with 'Cesario', the page Olivia's household is under the management of a steward Malvolio by name. He is a strict disciplinarian. Naturally he is not popular with Olivia's servants, Maria and Fabian. Olivia's uncle, the hard-drinking Sir Toby Belch, and his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek, (a wealthy but foolish and faint-hearted knight, who hopes to win Olivia's hand) also dislike Malvolio.

Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, who, she believes has been drowned in the shipwreck, arrives in Illyria with Antonio, a sea captain and his friend Antonio lends his purse to Sebastian and takes leave of him. Meanwhile Olivia sends a ring to Cesario through Malvolio, the self-conceited, peevish steward. Maria who is bent on humiliating, Malvolio, plots with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew Aguecheek to throw in Malvolio's way, a forged letter, as if written by Olivia professing her love for him and asking him to appear smiling in her presence, wearing yellow stockings and cross - garters.

Cesario meets Olivia again and now Olivia openly declares her love for him. Sir Andrew Aguecheek feels that the youth is spoiling his chances. Goaded on by Sir Toby, Sir Andrew Aguecheek challenges Cesario to a duel.

Meanwhile Malvolio reads the forged letter, and falls a victim to the hoax. He appears before Olivia wearing gaudy yellow stocking and cross - garters and smiling in a way which is unbecoming of him. Olivia is inclined to call him mad. Taking her at her word the conspirators throw Malvolio into a dark cell and ill-treat him to their hearts' content. Sir Toby then presses the timid knight to attack Cesario. Being a woman, Viola (Cesario) is frightened and helpless. But fortunately she is rescued by Antonio who arrives there. He mistakes Viola (in man's attire) for Sebastian. Antonio asks for his purse from Cesario. But Cesario denies any former acquaintance with Antonio.

Sebastian, left to himself, wanders through Illyria and comes near Olivia's house. Sir Andrew Aguecheek who now knows Cesario to be very timid rushes to attack Sebastian taking him to be Cesario. But Sebastian readily draws his sword and wounds the knight and also Sir Toby, who comes to rescue his friend. Olivia interferes. Mistaking Sebastian for Cesario, she takes him into the house, sends for a priest and promptly marries the surprised young man. In the meantime acting on

Maria's suggestion, Feste, the Clown, visits Malvolio in the guise of a curate and teases him further.

Duke Orsino with Cesario and other attendants appears before Olivia's house. The officers enter with Antonio. Antonio accuses Cesario of ingratitude. Orsino does not believe Antonio. But the Duke turns against Cesario when Olivia calls him 'husband' and calls for the priest to testify to the truth. Things get more complicated when the two wounded men - Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby accuse Cesario of being rude. But the re-appearance of Sabastian, the twin brother of Cesario (i.e., Viola) clears up the mystery. The Duke is glad to give up his attachment for Olivia when he learns that his page is really an accomplished young maiden who has fallen in love with him. Sir Toby weds Maria.

Malvolio, in the meantime, manages to send a letter to Olivia through the Clown. In it, he explains the trick played upon him. Under her orders, Fabian releases Malvolio from the cell. Malvolio produces the forged letter to which he has responded and has consequently received such a treatment at her hands. Olivia understands Malvolio's feelings. Ashamed and humiliated, Malvolio leaves Olivia's service declaring that he would take revenge on the whole lot of them.

2.8. Actwise Summary

Act I Scene i

The opening scenes of Shakespeare are usually purposeful and masterly. They serve almost all the purposes which a prologue was expected to serve in a classical play. Shakespeare did not want to introduce his play to the audience in an artificial way. So he made use of a part of the play itself to introduce his drama to them in a natural and interesting manner. His plays, therefore, begin straight away with people acting on the stage and by the time a few scenes of the first act come to an end, the audience know whatever they should know in order to follow the play with understanding and appreciation.

Generally, there is a self sufficiency in the first act of Shakespeare's plays. The first act gives the audience an idea of the background of the play. The audience is aware, by the end of the act, of the situation from which the action has begun. It usually introduces to the audience all the important characters of the drama and tells them something about their mutual relations also. Thirdly, it conjures up the dominant atmosphere of the play or, in other words, strikes the

key note of the play. By the time we come to the end of the I Act, we are sure to know whether the play is going to be a comedy or a tragedy or even something between the two.

There is a similar self-sufficiency in the opening scene of the play, i.e. the first scene of Act I. The opening scene of any play of Shakespeare usually serves all or some of the foregoing purposes. It may also start the action of the drama and arrest the attention of the audience. The opening scene of *The Tempest* or *Macbeth* for example, with all its bustle of a shipwreck in the former and the thunder and lightning, the witches and their song in the case of the latter, arrest the attention of the audience very effectively. Sometimes the very first line or two of the opening scene strikes the key-note of the play. The first or the opening scene of *The Merchant of Venice* begins with the words of Antonio, "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad". We are emotionally prepared for a play not made up of happy events only. Later we find that we are not far from the truth.

Almost all these functions are performed by the opening scene of *Twelfth Night*. The scene presents the love-sick, capricious Orsino, Duke of Illyria, who imagines himself to be passionately in love with the charming countess, Olivia. But Olivia does not reciprocate his love. Orsino calls for music which fascinates him and seems to feed his passion. No sooner have the musicians started playing music then he changes his mind, and abruptly orders them to stop. He describes most eloquently the nature of the quality of love, when Curio, an attendant suggests that he might go for hunting. To this, the Duke replies that he is being hunted by his own passion - his ardent love for Olivia. Presently Valentine, whom he had sent to Olivia, comes with the reply that Olivia has refused him admission and that he has been told that the lady is so overpowered with grief over her brother's death that she has taken a vow to spend seven years in solitary mourning. The Duke is impressed by this and he consoles himself with the thought that Olivia's deep love for her brother is a measure by which one can understand the intensity with which she will love her husband when she is married. The scene comes to a close with Orsino wishing to retire 'to sweet beds of flower' in a canopied bower, so that he may enjoy his love-thought better.

As befitting a romantic comedy, the scene begins with music and melting melodies, followed by the introduction (directly by his appearance) of one of the chief characters of the play - the sentimental and romantic lover, Duke Orsino. We

learn a good deal about him and his love for Olivia through his own words. The young Duke who is dreamy and changeable, is restless in body and in mind. The music which fascinated him soon disgusts him. He is highly sentimental and is more in love with the idea of being in love than with Olivia. He thinks of the qualities of love and its definitions rather than what he really feels. Hence his love for Olivia, we feel, is not real.

We also learn (though indirectly through a report) something about Olivia and the relation existing between her and Orsino. Olivia too, is as sentimental as the Duke. She luxuriates in grief as Orsino does in love. It is quite incredible that she could be so overwhelmed with grief as to completely ruin her chances of happiness, especially when she is left unprotected, by the death of her brother.

The scene also hints that Olivia's mourning could be a pretext to keep away the messengers of Orsino. If Orsino had been less involved in self-love he would have easily understood the cold attitude of Olivia for him. On the contrary when he is told of her resolution, he argues that a loving sister should prove more loving as a wife. This theorizing is sentimental and unconvincing.

The opening scene of *Twelfth Night* thus gives the audience an idea of the general tone of the play, and introduces two of the chief characters around whom much of the action in the main plot will revolve. Orsino's romantic love for Olivia and her rejection, her sentimental grief and her indiscreet resolution, one may anticipate, will provide for the 'romantic' element in the play.

Notes on the Opening Scene:

If music ..... play on - Since music is the food which best satisfies the hunger of love, let it continue to be played. There is a similar idea of music being the food of love, in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* Act II Sc. 5 II 1 & 2.

"*Give me some music; music, moody food*
Of us that trade in love".

The Duke's speech indicates that music is being played as the scene opens and stops when he begins to speak and at his command (in the first line) it is once again played.

that surfeiting .... so die - (not 'love' itself but) love's appetite (hunger, desire) for music may become sick and die out and thereby, in the course of time the feeling of love itself may die out. (Orsino wishes that his love might die of an excess of music which feeds and nourishes love.)

It had....fall - it died away softly.

like the sweet sound - the gentle murmur of the breeze. By a poetical figure of speech this sound, (instead of the breeze

		that causes it) is to bring (give) and carry away (steal) fragrance.
'Tis not.......... before	-	the appetite (for music) is beginning to sicken
O spirit of love	-	In this line Orsino directly addresses 'love' – It is a figure-of speech called apostrophe. (Apostrophe is a direct address to the dead, to the absent, or to a personified object or idea.)
O spirit of love.. ...high fantastical	-	These seven lines can be paraphrased as follows: Love is so susceptible to impressions that it seems as powerful (In its capacity to absorb ideas and feelings) as the ocean (in its capacity to receive the various streams and tributaries). For, however great the worth of a thing is that enters that capacity, it loses swiftly much of that worth and excellence and becomes cheap and ordinary. So capricious and rich in imagination is love that above all other faculties it alone has the power to create supremely fanciful images or concepts.
Quick	-	full of swift change, sensitive, alert, vigorous
Fresh	-	hungry, eager, full of life.
Notwithstanding thy capacity	-	in spite of your capacity or power to receive ideas, impressions, feelings etc.
validity and pitch	-	value, and excellence ('pitch' in the technical sense refers to the highest point of a bird's fight)
falls... low price	-	becomes base and loses its worth or esteem. Note the effective use of contrasts: 'validity' and 'low price'. 'pitch' and 'abatement'.
shapes	-	fantasies, changing images, concepts
fancy	-	here, love; sometimes it is used in the sense of 'imagination'.
alone	-	beyond every other faculty
high fantastical	-	supremely imaginative
hart	-	a male deer, stag (pun on the word 'heart')
So I do I have	-	so I do hunt the hart: i.e. my desires pursue my heart, which is the noblest part of me. (The heart was thought the noblest organ of the body).
O! when my eyes.. That instant	-	'The notion of love at first sight, as something akin to a sudden physical seizure, is the constant theme of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans.
Purged the ... pestilence	-	It seemed that in Olivia's presence, he was breathing a purer air (a fanciful thought expressed in fanciful language which is typical of the sentimental Duke). He implies that though Olivia seemed 'to purge the air' the sight of her affected him with the pestilence, the plague of love.
That instant... pursue me	-	The Duke says that from the moment when he first saw the goddess – like Olivia, his heart has become a helpless victim to love and is constantly pursued by his own desires, like a hart that is relentlessly chased by fierce hounds. The allusion is to the story of Actaen, the celebrated huntsman in Greek

mythology. Actaeon the hunter, gazed indiscreetly on Diana (the goddess of love and chastity) while she was bathing with her nymphs. In punishment for this, he was transformed into a deer and torn to pieces by his own hounds on mount Cithaeron. The points of comparison are sufficiently clear.

So please my lord - (an apologetic beginning to a statement) if I may be excused for saying this.

I might not be admitted - I could not gain admittance to her presence.

But from... answer - but has brought back this reply from her servant.

handmaid - maid servant (Maria)

The element...sad remembrance - the outer world itself for seven long years shall not have a full view of her veiled face; for like a cloistered nun, she will shut herself up and walk about her chamber in tearful meditation and would thus preserve the memory of her dear brother who is dead.

the element - the sky and the air around.

cloistress - one who keeps to the cloisters, a nun who lives in nunnery

and water chamber round - and shed tears of grief once a day in her seclusion

eye offending brine - (brine: salt water) here, tears which hurt or smart the eye.

to season - to preserve, keep fresh, to preserve by salting is a common feature. The metaphor of 'preserving' runs through these lines. (130 – 33)

brother's dead love - the love of the brother who is now dead.

This is an example of an inverted epithet as the epithet "dead" has been 'inverted' or has changed its position, and is placed before 'love' instead of being placed before 'brother's.'

O she that hath... that live in her - How ardently will Olivia (who possesses a rare sensitivity as to repay the love of a brother in this manner for seven years) love the man, when stuck by Cupid's golden shafts, she falls in love with him. Then her love for her husband shall eclipse all other affections such as her sisterly love.

fine frame - finely fashioned so tender as to feel deeply.

the rich golden shaft - in classical legends, Cupid, god of love had two kinds of arrows (shafts) one tipped with 'gold' to inspire love and the other tipped with 'lead' to repel love.

hath killed - has swallowed up, or eclipsed

the flock of ...else - her other affections such as sisterly love, friendship etc.

When liver.. .sweet perfections - A rather difficult passage which is explained in different ways. It can be explained as follows: (i) when liver, brain and heart, the seats respectively of passion, judgement and sentiments and the throne of all noble feelings and thoughts which constitute her rare perfection are supplied and filled: or (ii) when

her entire emotional and reasoning faculties besides her graces and attraction by which she is so sweetly and perfectly a woman are filled and supplied.

With one self king - The line is also read: 'with one self king - her sweet perfection' instead of 'perfections', taking 'perfection' to mean her husband. Hence i) 'engrossed' by the one and only king, her husband who will occupy these sovereign thrones (passion, judgement and sentiment) and reign alone. This will lead to her sweet perfection. (This is based on the idea that "woman receiveth perfection by the man".) But since the epithet 'sweet' does not sound agreeable with 'husband', some editors are inclined to explain' oneself king' to mean 'Love'. This line may then be explained thus: (ii) engrossed by one and the same king 'Love'; 'Love', having conquered all rivals, reigns supreme.

Away before me - lead the way, precede me.

Where love - so that thoughts of love can be enjoyed and cherished

thoughts.. bowers beneath the overhanging shade of trees.

Orsino feels that rich love thoughts can be best entertained in a romantic surrounding. The cool shade, the soft breeze and the incense-breathing flowers will contribute to enrich the fanciful thoughts of a lover.

canopied - covered like a canopy (canopy – covering over bed, throne etc, usually of cloth).

Act I - Scene II

Summary

This scene introduces Viola, the heroine of the play. She is seen conversing with a sea-captain, on the coast of Illyria. They have been saved from shipwreck; Viola is stricken with grief at the loss of her brother Sebastian, who she thinks, has been drowned. But the Captain tells her that he had seen her brother clinging on to the mast of the wrecked ship. The comforting words of the Captain fill her with the hope of her brother's safety. She further asks the Captain about Illyria and its ruler. Being a native of a place very near Illyria, the Captain knows the country well. He tells Viola that Duke Orsino is the ruler. Viola remembers the name, having heard her late father mention it. She recalls that Orsino was a bachelor then. The Captain tells her that, of late, it is rumoured that Orsino has fallen in love with Olivia, a virtuous countess, who has lost her brother recently and her father, a year before. Viola at once expresses her desire to seek service under Olivia. But the Captain tells her that it is certainly impossible as Olivia who is mourning her brother's death, will not admit any kind of petition.

Hence Viola decides to serve the Duke. She entreats the Captain to provide her with male attire and to introduce her to the Duke without disclosing her identity. She assures the Captain that she will prove worthy of his pains. The Captain readily agrees to help Viola in the manner proposed by her. Viola thanks him and promises him a bounteous reward.

Comment

The scene is important as it clearly reveals certain traits of Viola's character. Viola is helpless. She is shipwrecked and has lost her brother. She is cast upon a strange land. Yet she never loses hope, or feels desolate. On the other hand she is cheerful and optimistic. The least hint from the Captain about her brother's safety enlivens her hope of a similar escape of her brother. Unlike Olivia, who is sentimental, Viola is very natural and genuine in her anxiety and concern for her brother. That she is resourceful is clearly seen from her determination to face reality instead of brooding over her misfortunes. Being a lady of noble birth, and a stranger to Illyria, she prefers to seek service under a lady, a Countess. When it seems impossibility, she does not lose heart. She decides to serve the Duke. She wants to avoid getting into trouble, by remaining in disguise, till the proper time arrives for here to reveal her identity. Viola is both practical and intelligent. She is ready to make use of her talents of singing and speaking "in many sorts of music" to win the favour of the Duke. Her sincerity in complimenting the Captain and her promise of bounteous reward reveal her generous nature.

We feel that by her amiable manners and dignified behaviour Viola is sure to impress the Duke when he meets her. Thus in this scene the ground is prepared for presenting the important role of Viola in the play. The complication of the plot begins with Viola's next move i.e. her meeting the Duke only to fall in love with him at first sight.

NOTES

Illyria	-	the region bordering the east coast of the Adriatic was called Illyria in Shakespeare's day.
Elysium	-	Paradise or heaven. In Greek mythology, Elysium was the abode of the happy dead. (There is probably a pun owing to the similarity of sound in the first half of Illyria and Elysium)
Perchance	-	perhaps
It's perchance	-	'it is by chance' (again a pun on the two words)

So perchance may he be- so be it that by chance' he is saved to comfort you with chance to console you with the possibility of hope.

Poor number saved with you - the few sailors who were saved along with you ('number' is here used to indicate the plural.)

our driving boat - our boat that was drifting.

most provident in peril - very resourceful in danger.

bind - hold on firmly as if tied to it

courage and hope - the fearlessness in the face of danger and the hope to save his life.

teaching him the practice- (both courage and hope) teaching him the procedure.

lived - kept floating in spite of the rough waves.

Where, like Arion ...... back- This is an allusion to the Greek poet Arion, in classical mythology. He was a celebrated player on the cithara, a stringed instrument. Once while he was returning from Sicily after a musical contest, with many valuable prizes, the sailors in the ship, attracted by his treasure, plotted to murder him. Arion pleaded for his life but in vain. He requested that he might play his instrument once. At the end of the performance, he threw himself into the sea. He was saved by one of the dolphins which had been captivated by his music. The dolphins were supposed to be fond of music. The Captain compares Sebastian clinging on to a floating mast to Arion on the dolphin's back. Perhaps Sebastian's escape to safety is implied in this allusion.

hold acquaintance with the waves -be safely borne by the waves.

Mine own escape... the hope – The fact that I have escaped by good fortune encourages me to hope.

the like of him - that my brother would have had a similar escape.

Where to..... authority - your words seem to justify and strengthen my hope.

In nature as in name - noble in nature as in name. (Orsino being one of the noblest of Italian families).

It was fresh in rumour - as the latest piece of news it was being rumoured, or the recent rumour is etc.

Abjured - given up, renounced.

O that I served .... - I wish I could serve this lady and conceal my true status till it suits me or till I am able to bring my design to majority. According to Verity, Viola's plan was to take service in some household till she could arrange for her return home; then she could safely reveal who she was. Cowden Clarke interprets the lines as "Oh that I might not be presented to the world, till I had myself prepared the occasion for declaring what my condition really is", and sees in the words the idea of the shrinking diffidence with which a young and well - born lady dreads encountering publicity until she can do so under suitable protection.

delivered -	presented, exposed, discovered.
mine own occasion -	my own circumstances.
estate -	condition.
to compass -	to achieve, to bring about.
she will ..... suit -	she will not listen to any kind of request
Though nature.... Pollution -	though nature often convers a foul interior with a fair exterior
that thou hast.... character -	that you possess a fair (noble) nature which befit your fair (handsome) exterior (appearance)
what else may hap... wit -	I will be a page to Duke Orsino and allow other things to be shaped by Time. Let my wit (plan) be shaped by your silence.
conceal me what I am -	(by providing me with a disguise); conceal my true identity (as regards my sex and status)
as haply become... Intent -	as perhaps will suit my plan of serving as a page.
a eunuch to him -	(as) a male slave to the Duke.
Your mute -	here it means 'your silent helper' (mutes dumb or tongueless attendants in the Turkish haremes, to perform the order of the Sulthan). The captain assures that he would be as faithful as the mute.
let... see -	let me be made blind

Act 1 Scene III

Summary

The third scene is laid in a room in Olivia's house. Sir Toby, Olivia's uncle enters, expressing disapproval of Olivia's still mourning over her brother's death. Maria, an attendant tells him of Olivia's objections to his habits of excessive drinking and coming in late at nights. She particularly objects to Sir Toby bringing in his friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a foolish knight to be her wooer. Maria calls Sir Andrew a coward and a drunkard. Sir Toby refutes it and tells her that Sir Andrew is valiant and has many a natural talent. Sir Andrew Aguecheek joins them. He becomes the butt of ridicule and even Maria, the maid, cracks many jokes at his expense. When Sir Toby asks him to 'accost', he addresses Maria as "Good Mistress Accost" not knowing the meaning of 'accost'. When Maria leaves them, Sir Toby amuses himself by fooling him to his heart's desire. Sir Andrew is so dull - headed that he is hardly aware that Sir Toby is making a fool of him. He decides to quit the place since the Duke himself woos Olivia. Sir Toby, to whom Sir Andrew is a source of income, makes him believe that Olivia will never marry anyone above her social status. The credulous knight is thus deceived. He readily agrees to stay on. They laugh and trip and dance. The scene concludes thus, on a note of high spirited revelry.

Comment:

In contrast to the serious tone of the first two scenes, the third scene is a scene of mirth. It introduces the chief characters of the comic action and launches the sub-plot. The shift from a world of romance, of music and sentimentality, to the world of realism, of jollity and fellowship is an effective dramatic device which Shakespeare employs in order to hold the interest of the audience. The good humour and the deliberate verbal quibbles of Sir Toby, matched by Maria's ready wit, provides much entertainment. The audience cannot help laughing heartily at the foolishness of Sir Andrew who becomes that laughing stock on every possible occasion without himself being aware of it.

The scene, besides providing comic relief, throws much light on the minor characters of the play. Sir Toby's philosophy of life is that 'care's an enemy to life'. Cares and anxieties are kept far from the realm of his revelry. Neither the pangs of love nor the grief over a loss affects him. He professes friendship with an ignorant, witless knight Sir Andrew. By his good humour and wit, Sir Toby deceives the gullible Knight into spending his money lavishly, in his company. His keen sense of humour, his love of fun and his genius for sociability partially blind us to his vices.

Sir Andrew is not only dull-headed but stupid enough to entertain the thought of wooing Olivia for whom he thinks he is a perfect match. Diffident about winning Olivia's hand, he trusts Sir Toby and is ruled by his words. Possessing no originality he apes Sir Toby and echoes his very phrases. Even Maria the maid has fun at his enterprise

We understand from the scene that Maria is more than a mere menial. She is a companion to Olivia and is concerned about her reputation and security. She reproaches Sir Toby for keeping late hours. She can converse with Sir Toby and his friend without any feeling of inferiority. She is a perfect match for Sir Toby in her capacity for ready wit and pithy remarks. We may even go a step further and say that she leads or mis-leads Sir Toby by her shrewdness.

We should note that the first two scenes abound in exuberant poetry and exquisite verse, while the third scene is in prose. This is a comic scene, involving chiefly the minor characters, and their speech which is in ordinary day-to-day prose, is suited to their role. Moreover, as the serious tone of the play is kept in the

background in the context of light - hearted comic dialogue, the use of prose seems appropriate and purposeful.

Notes:

What a plague	-	a common oath similar to "what the devil ...." etc.
Care's an enemy to life	-	Care or worry kills the enjoyment of life. The usual proverbial saying is 'care killed a cat'. Sir Toby's attitude to life is revealed in these words.
By my troth	-	by my faith
earlier o' nights	-	earlier at nights
cousin	-	niece
exception	-	objection
ill hours	-	late hours; staying out very late at night.
except before excepted	-	a legal phrase: "with the exception previously noted"
confine yourself...order	-	restrict yourself to a reasonable limit of decency.
confine myself....I am	-	a quibble on the word 'confine' (with reference to Maria's last remark and takes it to mean 'confine clothes' or 'dress oneself', and so replies that he will not dress in finer clothes than what he is wearing.
strap	-	the piece of leather attached to boots by which they are drawn on.
an they be .... strap	-	and if they are not good enough let them be hanged with a halter made of their own straps.
quaffing	-	drinking too much
He's as tall ..... Illyria	-	He is as able a man as any in Illyria. The word 'tall' means stout, valiant, bold, handsome, etc.

The word is used here in an ironical sense. Maria's reply following Sir Toby's words shows her intentional misunderstanding of the word. She understands in to mean 'of great height'.

ducats	-	gold coins
but he'll have..... in a year	-	but he will spend all his fortune in a single year.
viol -de-gamboys	-	a musical instrument (resembling the violin played by holding it upon or between the legs (gamba - an Italian word meaning leg); a bass viol.
almost natural	-	a pun on the word 'natural'. Some texts read this as 'all, most natural', meaning 'every quality of folly', 'Natural' in both the readings means half - witted person or an idiot.
gift of a coward	-	(talent) that with which a coward is gifted, namely cowardice
allay	-	lessen, to modify his taste for (the gusto), the delight or enjoyment.
gift of a grave	-	death
By this hand...	-	'I swear by this hand' - an oath
substractors	-	a perversion of 'detractors' (people who bring down the merit or reputation of others) slanderers.
coystril	-	knave, base fellow
turn o'... parish top	-	drink till his head reels like a parish top in giddiness.

parish top - "a large top was formerly kept in every village, to be whipped in frosty weather, that the peasants may be kept warm by exercise and out of mischief while they could not work" (Steevens)

Castiliano Vulgo - a phrase of uncertain meaning. Perhaps Sir Toby is suggesting that Maria should put on a grave, solemn countenance like the Castilian people (the Spaniards); for Sir Toby refers in the next line to the entrance of Sir Andrew Ague Face. .

Sir Toby substitutes 'Agueface' for 'Aguecheek' perhaps because Sir Andrew appears lean and pale like one affected by 'ague' (or malarial disease). Sir Toby, it should be remembered, is not quite sober and 'Agueface' may be just his coinage.

Shrew - a sharp - tongued, witty woman; here the word is used as a term of endearment.

Accost - greet or address the lady with courtesy. 'Accost', is a nautical term meaning 'go alongside'.

Sir And: What's that?
Sir Toby: My niece's chambermaid.
Sir And: Good Mistress Accost......
Maria: My name is Mary, Sir.
Sir And: Good Mistress Mary Accost.

What does 'accost' mean? Sir Andrew asks for the meaning of the word 'accost'. Bur Sir Toby takes the question to mean "who is that" and so replies "my niece's chambermaid", Sir Andrew therefore concludes that "Accost" is the name of the chambermaid and addresses the lady (Maria) as "Mistress Accost". When Maria tells him that her name is Mary, the foolish knight still blunders by calling her "good Mistress Mary Accost" thinking that he should have addressed the lady by her full name. The ignorance of Sir Andrew ("who speaks three or four languages word for word without a book") is glaring!

front her - confront her; face her;

board her - attack her in speech (from a nautical term for attacking, or forcing one's way on board a ship)

woo her - make love to her.

assail her - siege her (heart)

undertake her - take in hand or deal with; venture to attack in the manner you propose.

in this company - in the presence of the onlookers.

An thou let part.. - if you allow her to depart in this way without attacking her, you may never have the chance of drawing sword in a duel in proof of your valour.

fools in hand - fools to deal with.

I have not you by the hand - I am not holding your hand.

Marry - a corruption of 'Mary' mother of Christ; an oath.

'thought is free' - (a proverbial saying). Here Maria means that since she is holding Sir Andrew's hand, she is free to think that Sir Andrew is a fool.

bring your hand ... drink- A proverbial phrase among forward maid-servants

to ask at once for a kiss and a present.

buttery bar -	The buttery is a room in public institutions and big houses, where bread, ale and other provisions are stored. ('buttery' is actually a corruption of 'bottlery' or place for bottles.) The opening or a kind of half door at which the provisions were served out from the store room was called the buttery hatch and the bar on the top of it where the things were kept was the 'buttery bar'.
Let it drink -	because it is so parched and dry.
what's your metaphor? -	what do you imply?
It's dry sir' -	'your hand is dry'. A dry hand was regarded as a sign of miserliness and also of coldness of nature. Maria implies that Sir Andrew is liberal in neither money nor love. Sir Andrew who is a dullard takes Maria's words literally. This gives another chance for Maria to use the word, 'dry' in the sense of 'dull', 'foolish' or 'stupid' (in the following line - 'a dry jest. Sir'.)
I have them at my... ... ends -	another quibble on the expression 'finger's ends'. Maria means '(1) that she is always ready with a joke; (2) that she has Sir Andrew, (a fool, dry of wit) by the hand; and therefore she has only 'dry jests' ready.
I let go -	I am barren now that I am free of your hand, I am empty of dry jests.
canary sweet -	wine imported from the Canary Islands.
Thou lackest... canary -	you need a cup of canary to cheer you or to put spirit into you
"Never in your.,. down" -	quibble on the words "put down". Sir Andrew repeats the phrase "put down" and in reply to Sir Toby, says that he is never put down (laid flat) except by excessive drinking of canary.
a Christian -	here it means any other ordinary person.
I am great... to my wit -	The English were known for their fondness for beef. Beef, being gross and heavy, was supposed to dull the brain, though it gave great courage to the eater. Sir Andrew therefore seems to claim indirectly that he is valiant and finds an excuse for the dullness of his brains.
An I thought... ... it -	if I knew positively (that beef - eating causes dullness) I would give it up altogether
Pourquoi -	French word meaning 'why' or 'for what'.
tongues -	A pun on the word 'tongues' (meaning languages) and 'tongs' (the' curling irons). In Elizabethan times the two words were pronounced almost alike.
fencing -	the art of fighting with long slender swords.
Bear-baiting -	the setting on dogs to bait or worry a bear tied to the stake. Fencing, dancing, falconry and bear - baiting were some of the favourite pastimes of the Elizabethans.

the arts - the liberal arts which chiefly consist of humanities such as languages and literature: history, philosophy etc.

O! had I but followed the arts! Then hadst thou... head of hair. Not understanding the French word 'Pourquoi', Sir Andrew wants to know the meaning. He regrets having wasted his time in fashionable recreations like fencing, dancing and bear - baiting. Had he devoted his time to the learning of tongues (language) he would have easily understood the meaning of 'Pourquoi' .... In reply to this reflection, the quick-witted Sir Toby tells Sir Andrew that if he had devoted his time to the 'tongs' (the curling irons used to curl the hair) he would have had by now 'an excellent head of curly hair'. (Sir Toby's boast in 1.24 of his friend's knowledge is ludicrously exposed).

why would ... ... my hair? - Would that (the learning of languages have mended (improved) my hair?

for thou seest... by nature - for you see your hair does not curl naturally. The word 'nature' is to be contrasted with 'arts' which here means 'by artificial methods'.

Excellent - fine; (used most ironically by Sir Toby)

distaff - a stick round which wool, flax etc. are wound for spinning by hand.

flax - fibre from a plant which is used for making linen.

It hangs .... distaff - the hair hangs 'like - flax on a distaff' i.e. straight and stiff.

And I hope..... spin it off - I hope to see you grow bald under the strain of married life.

It's four ... ... none of me - the chances of her loving or marrying me are remote.

She'll not......nor wit - She will not marry one who is superior to her in rank, age or intelligence.

There's life.... man - There is no reason to feel disappointed; there is hope (from the proverbial expression "while there is life, there is hope".)

I'll stay a month longer - Sir Andrew's sudden change of plan and determination to stay on has the most comic effect. His decision to tarry longer has no reasonable grounds. But from the remarks that follow, we get an idea of what might have encouraged him to postpone his journey, namely, 'revels' and 'masques' in the company of Sir Toby.

of the strangest mind - of a fantastical frame of mind; of a peculiar disposition.

Masques - dances, entertainments in which the performers wear masks.

Kickshawses - French word meaning trifles commonly applied to cookery, meaning "fanciful dishes". Here it means masques and revels. It is the plural form of 'kickshaws'

galliard - a quick and lively dance in triple time consisting of five steps with a 'caper' (leap) before the fifth.

I can cut a caper - I can perform the dancing movement 'capriole' or the leap perfectly.

I can cut the mutton to it- with a quibble on the word 'caper'; Sir Toby deliberately takes 'caper' to mean caper sauce. 'Caper' is an edible shrub, used in preparing sauce.

back – trick - a caper backward in dancing; or series of backward steps.

simply as strong.... Illyria- absolutely in as high a degree of perfection; as beautifully as any man in the country.

Wherefore are these things- ... star galliard On Sir Andrew boasting of his rare abilities in dancing, Sir Toby tickles his vanity by a series of rhetorical interrogations.

Wherefore have... before them? -Why are your talent hidden from the public world like portraits that are curtained? (It was customary to protect fine portraits from light and dust with curtains).

Are they likely... picture? - Are they (your talents) like Mistress Mall's picture, likely to get spoilt by exposure?

Mistress Mall's picture - This may mean ' a lady's picture' in general, or perhaps the reference could be to the picture merely of some obscure kitchen wench, hung in some corner and covered with dust because uncurtained; or Sir Toby may be referring and pointing to an uncovered dusty picture of Maria, hanging in the room.

'Mall' is the shortened form of Mary. So 'Mistress Mall' has been interpreted with reference to various Mary's. Many editors agree that the lady referred to is one Mary Firth alias Moll Cutpurse. She was a notorious woman and her exploits were dramatized by Dekker in his play 'Roaring Girl'.

Moll Cutpurse being a woman of disrepute, her portrait (if at all there had been one) must have been left uncared for so that it accumulated dust. But Sir Andrew, (Sir Toby says), need not fear that his talents will be spoilt by exposure or display like the above mentioned portrait. So he encourages Sir Andrew to exhibit freely his abilities in dancing.

This allusion, being a topical one, would certainly have amused the Elizabethan audience.

coranto - a lively rapid dance.

My very walk should be a jig - (if only I possess such capacity for dancing) even my most sober movement shall be like a jig (jigfa - quick and merry dance). Sir Toby says that, if he were as talented as Sir Andrew, he would dance the galliard while going to church and the coranto while returning, to the great wonder of the crowd, the church going public.

under the star - it was a common belief that the character, bodies and fortunes of men were influenced by the star under which they were born. Alluding to this belief, Sir Toby, humorously

and ironically suggests that as Sir Andrew is born under the star that is particularly favourable to galliard, he is destined to excel in dancing.

Indifferent well	-	looks graceful enough.
In flame... stock	-	in bright yellow - red stockings.
Taurus	-	The sign of a bull, one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. According to medieval astrology, each constellation of the zodiac was thought to influence a certain part of the human body. Taurus governed the neck and not the sides and heart or the legs and thighs as suggested respectively by Sir Andrew and Sir Toby.

Act 1 - Scene IV

Summary:

Viola has disguised herself as a boy. She serves Orsino as his page under the name of Cesario. Within a short time, Cesario has become the Duke's favourite and his confidant. He commissions Cesario to plead on his behalf with Lady Olivia for her love. He instructs him to be importunate and not to be discouraged by difficulties. When admitted to her presence, Cesario should make known to her, his master's ardent love for her. Orsino is certain that Olivia will condescend to hear his petition when it is presented by so charming a youth as Cesario. Cesario promises to do his best to win Olivia's love for the Duke. The scene closes with Viola wishing that only she should be the Duke's wife, whoever she woos on his behalf.

I'll do my best
To woo your lady: [Aside] - yet a barful strife!
Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife".

Comments:

It is clear from the opening lines of the scene that Viola, by her pleasing manners, has already won the favour of the Duke. She bears herself with such ease and dignity that no one suspects her to be a young maiden in disguise. The Duke comes very near to detection when he remarks: "All is semblative a woman's part".

Shakespeare takes the opportunity to put in another good word for the Duke, who is not inconstant in his favours. The Duke is prepared to lavish his wealth on Cesario if he returns with a favourable reply from Olivia. He expresses to the page his passionate love for Olivia in fine speeches, which makes one feel

that he is too loud to be deep. His description of the youthfulness of the page and his womanly appearance is exuberant and fanciful. It launches the dramatic irony of their future relationships.

Viola on her part is prepared to do her best as the Duke's messenger, though she has already fallen in love with him. But her love unlike that of Orsino's inconstant and over eloquent fancy, is quiet, unchanging and modest. She expresses her love without transgressing the proprieties and delicacies of her sex.

This scene, though a short one, contributes to the development of the plot. The first three scenes introduce some of the principal characters and their fortunes, and the relation in which they were placed towards one another. With this scene begins what may be termed 'the complication' of the play. Orsino loves Olivia and now Viola loves Orsino.

Viola does not and cannot reveal her love. The Duke also does not know that his page is a maiden and she loves trim. The hints of the charm of the young page therefore prepares the audience for what naturally must follow to complete the love triangle - Olivia falling in love with the messenger, the disguised Viola. What leads to the climax of the complication will be made clear in the following scene.

The humour and interest of the scenes in which Viola is seen with the Duke and later with Olivia, turn largely upon the fact that they do not know her to be a girl while the audience does. Orsino and Olivia say things which have a point for the audience, while they themselves are unconscious of it. Likewise many of Viola's remarks contain a veiled allusion to her sex which the audience perceives whereas they are plain statements for Orsino or Olivia. This device which is known as dramatic irony, is frequently employed in this scene.

Notes:

you are... advanced	-	There is every chance of his promoting you to a very high position.
already you... stranger	-	You are already familiar and intimate with him.
Thou	-	The Duke addresses Cesario as 'thou'. The use of thou is a sign of familiarity.
no less but all	-	no less than the whole truth (here, the truth of his love for Olivia).
Unclasped to thee...secret soul	-	(I have) revealed to you everything, even those secrets. I have concealed from others. Orsino's heart is spoken of as a book in

which are put down his secret thought of love.

address ... ... her - direct your steps to her house.

be not.. ... access - do not allow yourself any refusal; insist upon being allowed to see her.

tell them... audience - tell them that till you have seen her, you will not budge an inch, that you will plant your foot immovably.

be clamorous - be persistent; keep shouting and repeating.

leap..... ...bounds - throw off all your politeness; overleap the bounds of civility and good manners.

say - suppose

Surprise.... faith - take her by surprise and use the occasion to pour out the story of my heartfelt, ardent love for her.

It shall become..... woes - You are best suited to represent to her my woes.

She will ..... grave aspect - She will certainly listen to it better from so young and charming a messenger as you, than from one of a more serious appearance.

nuncio - messenger.

they shall ... a man - Those people who say that you have arrived at manhood misrepresent your happy, fortunate youthfulness, for you are yet a boy in appearance.

Here is an example of what is known as "dramatic irony". The Duke and the other characters on the stage do not know that 'Cesario' is Viola, a young maiden. When the Duke tells him that he is more 'like a lady in appearance than a lad', he is speaking the truth without being aware of the truth. Hence the words of the Duke are ironical. There will be many more instances of dramatic irony in the course of the play.

Diana - In classical mythology, the goddess of hunting, famed for her devotion to chastity. She represents perfect femininity.

rubious - ruby red.

pipe - wind pipe here it refers to the voice

maiden's organ - lady's voice

shrill and sound - high yet clear and unbroken (uncracked).

And all is.... part - (an instance of dramatic irony.) Everything about you resembles a woman. "Woman's part" may also mean "the theatrical role as a woman" or "as the female character in a play", because on the Elizabethan stage female parts were acted by boys.

thy constellation...affair- The star under which you were born makes you most suitable to undertake this task. (It was a common belief that a man's disposition and his fortune were affected by the star which was in the ascendant at the time of his birth)

myself am best...company- I am happy when left to myself.

Prosper well.. ..thine - if you succeed in the undertaking- you shall call your lord's fortune yours as freely as he calls it his.

To woo your lady	-	to court your beloved (Lady Olivia) on your behalf.
Yet, a barful .... wife	-	This short passage is an aside spoken by Viola. An aside is a dramatic device - By theatrical convention, the aside is presumed to be inaudible to other characters on the stage while the audience are taken into confidence. They are informed of something of which the other characters are ignorant.
barful	-	full of bars, impediments or difficulties.
barful strife	-	This is a contest which, if I succeed in it, will be a barrier to my own happiness; that is, if Viola succeeds in winning Olivia's love for Orsino, it will bring unhappiness to her because she herself has fallen in love with Orsino.

Act 1 - Scene V

Summary :

Maria, Olivia's maid threatens Feste, the clown and demands an explanation for his long absence from Olivia's house-hold. But the clown by his witty remarks manages to evade answering her question. Maria tells him that Olivia is so displeased with him that she might even dismiss him, unless Feste makes his excuses wisely. When he is left alone, Feste prepares himself to meet Olivia by invoking wit to come to his aid.

Olivia meets Feste. Malvolio, the steward, is with her. At first she is angry with the clown and orders that the fool should be removed from her presence. But Feste proves in his own way, that Olivia is a fool. Feste's wit and resourcefulness please her and she is mollified. She turns to Malvolio for his opinion about the clown. Malvolio accuses Olivia of encouraging the fool by enjoying his insipid and commonplace jests. On hearing the cold remark of Malvolio, Olivia points out to him his inability to enjoy harmless fun, as he is too full of 'self -love'.

Maria informs Olivia that a young gentleman has come to see her and that he is being prevented from entering the house by Sir Toby. Olivia asks Malvolio to send away the young man at the gate if he is a messenger from Duke Orsino. When Sir Toby highly intoxicated, comes into the room, Olivia commands the clown to take charge of him. Malvolio returns with the information that the messenger is determined to meet Olivia and that he refuses to listen to excuses. Malvolio adds further that the young man is handsome and shrewd.

Malvolio's account of the strange young messenger makes Olivia curious and she grants permission to show in the messenger. She asks Maria for her veil and prepares herself to meet the messenger. Cesario (Viola) enters. He wants to

know if Olivia is the lady of the house as his message concerns her. Olivia is not inclined to hear the message. But the page - boy insists on hearing it. Olivia sends away Maria as the messenger does not want anybody else to hear it. Cesario now requests Olivia to show her face. When Olivia unveils her face, the messenger praises her rare beauty. He then explains to her Orsino's devoted and steadfast love for her, for which even her beauty cannot be a fit recompense. Olivia, while admitting Orsino's good qualities makes it clear that she cannot love the Duke. Cesario tells her that it is not a convincing reply. Olivia gradually becomes more and more interested in the audacious messenger than in his message. She asks him to return to his master and tell him that she cannot love him, and that henceforth, she will not entertain any more messengers from him. However, Cesario may come to tell her how the Duke has taken her refusal.

Cesario takes leave of her. Then left to herself, Olivia reflects on all that has passed between her and Cesario. She is certain that Cesario is a gentleman. She tries to control her passion but in vain. She calls Malvolio and gives him a ring asking him to return it to Cesario, saying it is Cesario's ring. (Of course, Cesario never gave her a ring; it is Olivia's excuse for sending a ring as a token of her love for Cesario,) Having sent Malvolio with the ring, she admits that she has obeyed an impulse over which she has no control. So she abandons herself and her future to the uncontrollable power of fate:

Fate, show thy force: ourselves we do not owe:
What is decreed must be and be this so!

Comments:

This scene marks an important stage in the development of action in the play. In the preceding scenes, we have only heard of Olivia. Now we meet her face to face. But before her entry, Shakespeare introduces Feste, the clown and Maria, to build up our picture of Olivia's favour. Though a clown, he is no fool. His proof that Olivia is a fool draws our attention to her sentimental mourning and rash vow. The clown's arrival is a source of relief and joy to her.

Along with Olivia, Malvolio, a principal character who serves to connect the two plots of the play, is introduced. Olivia's generous appraisal of the clown's wit sets off Malvolio's hostility, which displays his inflated self-conceit. This 'self-love' is his master passion which incites the clown to take revenge on him. Shakespeare suggests in the very first act of the play, the ground of Malvolio's

gulling which is the theme of the sub plot. Sir Toby's appearance on the scene in his half-intoxicated state and his announcement of a gentleman at the gate provide a short entertainment for the audience. It also partly contributes to the careful preparation for Viola's entry. Since her message and its effect upon Olivia will be the quintessence of this important scene.

The encounter between Olivia and Viola is the crucial event in the action of the main plot, as it has relevance to the past as well as to the future action of the play. Orsino's prophecy in Act I sc. I of how Olivia will love the man with whom she falls in love, and of the success of Cesario in making Olivia listen to his message in Act I. Sc. IV, comes true. The complication of the plot that begins in scene iv with Viola's disguise, now reaches its climax: Viola loves Orsino. Orsino loves Olivia and Olivia loves Cesario (the disguised Viola).

The refined manners of the two ladies, their mutual exchange of witty intellectual repartee and the constant balance between lightness and gravity with the dramatic irony of Viola's situation underlying both make the scene one of the best in the whole play. Viola's sincere praise of Olivia's beauty shows that she is generous and free from envy. She comments upon Olivia's refusal to marry Orsino and her description of his pangs and sighs of fire, speak of her sincerity in fulfilling her mission as Orsino's embassy. Viola's faithful utterance of Orsino's love for Olivia carries with it all the force of her own love for him.

There is flippancy in Olivia's conceits upon 'divinity' 'picture' and 'schedule' and her prose throws Viola's verse into relief. Her generous, guiltless, and free disposition endows her with a respectability and the inmates of her household accept her authority. Her beauty, lively nature and her curiosity go well with her as a character of a romantic comedy. Her curiosity in the messenger, his status and fortune builds up gradually resulting in the impulsive act of sending a ring as a token of her love. Her conflict between love and rank, revelated in her self - rebuke, and in her act of misleading Malvolio to think that Cesario is a peevish messenger shows her sense of modesty and restraint. Yet one is compelled to make allowances for her sudden falling in love on the basis that it is love at first sight.

Love as an irresistible passion, whether it be Orsino's for Olivia, Viola's for Orsino or Olivia's for the disguised Viola becomes the central theme of the play. It provides one of the fundamental requisites of a romantic comedy. The

scene is broken up with entries and exits; still our attention is never allowed to wander. On the other hand at every step the scene gains momentum and when at the end Olivia soliloquises, the audience too becomes curious to know "what will become of this" complication. They see what Viola is yet to see and that anticipates a new situation, a further development in the plot.

Notes:

tell me ... been - These words of Maria indirectly inform the audience of Feste's absence without previous notice from Olivia's household.

bristle - short, stiff coarse hair.

I'll not... they excuse - I will not open my mouth to speak on your behalf or by way of your excuse, to Lady Olivia.

to fear no colours - to fear no foe; a common saying derived from the wars. 'colours' here refers to the standards or the colours of the flag of the enemy.

There is also a pun on the words 'colour' (flag) and 'collar' (the hangman's noose). Hence, a man once well hanged has no need to fear anything, be it his foe or the hangman.

Make that good - prove that; justify what you have said

He shall ....fear - Having, been hanged already, he will not meet anyone (the foe or the hangman).

lenten answer - dull reply, thin repartee, (lent being a season of fasting)

In the wars......foolery - Maria here refers to the origin (military) of the phrase 'I fear no colours' and says that it is good enough for a fool to quote it in his foolery. Wilson interprets 'in the wars' as 'to have been in the war' or to get into some brawl, which the fool may give as an excuse for his absence. But if 'that' is taken to mean 'fear no colours', Maria might mean that it would be a bold reply to Olivia's displeasure, since it needs courage to say, 'I fear no colours when he is really in the wars' with Olivia.

God give them...talents- A nonsensical ejaculation. It is Feste's inversion of "God give them wisdom that have none and those that are wise, let them use their talents". The clown alludes to the parable of the talents in Matthew XXV, in which the servant who was given one talent (coin) buried it. Even that one talent was taken away from him by his master and given to another who had doubled the five talents entrusted to him. At the conclusion of the parable, Christ says, "for unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance but from him that hath not shall be taken even which he hath".

to be turned away .. to you?- To be dismissed or sent away from service and

hence subjected to hardships is that not as bad as being hanged?

Many a good...bad marriage- There are a few proverbs which represent marriage as a dangerous undertaking such as "better be half - hanged than ill - wed" and "wedding and hanging go by destiny". Hence to Maria's warning, the clown replies that many are saved from a miserable married life by being hanged before they marry and that hanging prevents many from bad marriage.

as for turning....bear it out - let the warm summer weather make it (the dismissal) endurable to me.

resolute firm - determined.

That if one ... - A coarse joke. Maria puns on the word 'points'. 'Points' in the sense in which Maria uses it refers, to the tagged laces with metal points attaching the breeches (trousers) to doublet (close fitting garment for the upper part of the body) Maria means that if one 'point' or lace gives way, the other will hold the breeches, or if body 'points' should give way the breeches would fall.

gaskins - wide loose breeches.

If Sir Toby .... Illyria - if Sir Toby turns sober by giving up drinking, he deserves to have as witty a maiden as yourself.

A piece of Eve's flesh - Eve being the first created woman.

Wit - mental powers; intelligence.

Those wits... fools - Those people who think that they are endowed with wit (intelligence) often prove to be fools.

and I that wise man - and I who profess to be a fool may appear a wise man.

Quinapalus - an imaginary philosopher invented by the clown as an authority to quote in support of his own maxim. It is part of the clown's professional humour to invent characters with sonorous names. Moreover the clown may be parodying the pedants of the age.

"Better foolish wit" - it is better to be a clever jester than be a supposed wise man who is really a fool.

Take away the lady - The lady orders that the fool should be removed from her presence. But she is the fool and so let her be taken away. This is the simple logic of the clown.

Go to - enough.

dry fool - a fool, whose capacity for delightful fooling has run dry; a fool barren of jests.

Madonna - An Italian word, meaning 'my lady'.

Give the... a drink - Give the thirsty fool a drink; a pun on the word 'dry' meaning (1) dull; (2) thirsty.

let the ... him - "Let him be sent to the mender of old clothes, shoes etc to be patched up". Another instance of word quibble, 'mend' meaning (1) amend and (2) repair.

botcher - one who professionally mends (often used of a tailor).

Anything.. What remedy?-	The argument of the clown may be summed up as follows: Nobody is absolutely good or absolutely wicked. The good people have some 'patch of vice' and the wicked have some 'patch of virtue'. Right and wrong are inter-woven and hence nothing in human life is perfect in itself. Every person in some way or other has to be 'mended'. The clown in conclusion adds an implied remark that if Olivia realizes the truth behind his argument she ought to be considerate towards him for she is as much a transgressor as himself. If the lady is not convinced, what is the remedy?
syllogism -	form of reasoning; logical statement of an argument.
As there is no true cuckold ... flower -	calamity (misfortune) is here represented as a husband who is deceived by his wife allowing another man to come between them. (cuckold - man whose wife has been unfaithful to him. It was believed that horns would grow on the head of such a man)
Misprision -	(from a legal term) misunderstanding.
cucullus non facit monachum -	a common Latin proverb which means that "a cowl (hood) does not make a monk".
That's as much that to say... brain -	which is as much as to say that though I wear a motley, still that does not make me a fool as regards my brain. (motley – fool's dress of many colours). The Elizabethan jester had, "a suit of red and yellow alternately; a hood with an ass's ears and a cock's crest and "double" or a mock scepter ending in a fool's head.
Dexterously -	Elizabethan spelling for 'dexterously' meaning skillfully; or perhaps the clown deliberately mispronounces the word.
catechize -	instruct or teach by putting questions and eliciting answers
good .... Virtue -	my good virtuous lady; my mouse – my little one, a term of endearment for girls.
I'll bide -	I'll submit myself to ....
The more fool ... gentleman-	Feste, the clown, cleverly proves that Olivia is a big Fool to mourn for her brother's soul being in heaven. So he says that the lady, who is a fool should be taken away, and not he.
doth he not mend -	does he not improve? (i.e. improve by being witty, as he grows more amusing and less dull).
yes, and shall... shake him-	Malvolio deliberately understands Olivia's word 'mend' as 'mend his folly' that is, to grow more foolish – Hence his reply that the clown will improve in folly till death.
infirmity that. ... fool -	The weakness that accompanies a man in his old age affects his mental faculties and impairs the wisdom of the wise people. In the case of fools, the same

infirmity increases their folly and makes them more worthy of their title.

decays	-	causes to decay.
God send you ..... folly	-	The clown wishes that Malvolio should quickly become old and inform so that his folly will increase and he will become a perfect fool.
Sir Toby will ... no fox	-	Sir Toby will readily swear that I am not a cunning, dangerous fellow (like you).
not pass his word	-	will not pledge his word.
that you are no fool	-	that you are not a fool (The clown implies that Malvolio is both a fox and a fool)
barren rascal	-	dull fool; fool, barren of jests;
put down with	-	silenced by
an ordinary fool	-	a common fool, who is not worthy to be a professional jester
he is out of his guard	-	he is defenceless
minister occasion	-	afford opportunity for his fooling
gagged	-	silent, tongue-tied
I protest.... zanies	-	I declare that I consider those wise people who laugh so heartily at such fools (as Feste no better than the poor imitators or attendants on fools).
Wise men	-	men who have their wits (as opposed to fools) here, Olivia.
crow	-	laugh loudly.
set kind of fools	-	fools who are not spontaneous.
zanies	-	A zany is a follower of a clown, who dresses like his master, accompanies him on the stage and imitates his tricks; a fool's fool (Malvolio's use of the word 'zanies' with reference to Olivia, has a special tinge of contempt.)
You are .... appetite	-	You suffer from the sickness of self-conceit and consider everything with a diseased judgment.
sick of	-	sick due to ; sick out of.
self love	-	self-conceit
and taste	-	and regard or judge everything.
distempered	-	diseased; ill - tempered.
appetite	-	The word appetite rounds off the metaphor that run through lines 87 and 88. The metaphor is that of a sick man suffering from a disease say, jaundice. Everything appears yellow to his jaundiced eyes. Being sick, he cannot enjoy what is palatable to others.

Similarly, Malvolio who is self-centered, cannot enjoy the simple jests of the clown which, for Olivia and others provide a delightful entertainment.

generous	-	liberal-minded.
guiltless	-	innocent; free from malice.
free	-	magnanimous; frank.
bird bolts	-	flat-headed arrows for shooting birds. They are quite harmless compared to connon balls. Therefore, Olivia compares the clown's harmless jokes to bird bolts.

cannon bullets	-	cannon balls, which are really dangerous.
To be generous ... bullets	-	What appears harmless sport to those who are generous by nature and free of malice and unsuspicious of others seems to be a serious offence to you. (Olivia implies that Malvolio is devoid of a sense of humour.)
allowed fool	-	licensed fool, possessing the right to jest at the expense of his social superiors.
discreet man	-	wise man.
There is no .... reprove	-	"just as a professional fool is privileged ('allowed') to say what he likes, so is a discreet man privileged to reprove as much as he likes; the one will not be accused of slander, not the other of railing".
Now Mercury.... fools	-	May Mercury teach thee to lie, since you have spoken in favour of fools. (The clown hints that Olivia has spoken well of fools at the expense of truth)
indue	-	endow, bestow.
leasing	-	lying.
much desires	-	who much desires, the relative pronoun 'who' is omitted.
well attended	-	who has several attendants with him.
hold him in delay	-	hold him in check and so delay his coming to me
Fetch him off	-	get him out of the way.
speaks nothing ... mad man	-	he talks nothing but what a mad man would.
Fie on him!	-	shame on him!
I am sick or .... at home	-	Tell him I am sick or that I am not at home.
Now you see, sir...	-	Olivia's words to the clown alluding to Malvolio's displeasure.
grows old	-	grows stale.
Thou hast spoke ... be a fool	-	The clown expresses his approval of Olivia's defence of fools and their rights. He says that Olivia has taken up the cause of fools spontaneously and generously as if her eldest son would be a fool.
for here he comes	-	referring to the entry of Sir Toby.
pia mater	-	the thin membrane which immediately envelops the brain.
pickle herring	-	Herrings (a kind of fish) pickled in brine, are a dish. Sir Toby is likely to eat in plenty as a provocative to drinking and so would be subject to indigestion resulting in hiccoughs.
How now sot!	-	(addressed the clown);
sot	-	a stupid fellow, a drunkard; the humour here lies in the drunken Sir Toby addressing the clown as drunkard.
how have you ..... lethargy?	-	how is it that you are in this half-sleep state so early in the morning?
Lechery! I defy lechery	-	The word 'lethargy' is taken as 'lechery' or lewdness (lust) by Sir Toby; defy - deny.
one draught above heat	-	one glass or a little more is enough to warm the blood.

crowner -	coroner ; an officer appointed by the crown and specially one who holds the inquest into the cause of a man's death.
sit o' my coz -	hold an inquest upon my cousin
he's in the .... of drink -	He is excessively drunk.
He's but mad yet -	He is still in the second degree only (according to the clown's classification of degrees earlier.)
shall look to	- shall take care of.
he takes on him..... with you-	he assumes that he knows it and therefore instead of getting away, (as one might expect him to do) he comes to speak with you.
He's fortified.... denial -	He is well-prepared against any excuse that might be put forward, to prevent him from seeing you.
Sheriff's post -	Large, decorated posts were erected at the doors of mayors and sheriffs just to mark the residence of authority.
supporter to a bench -	as firmly fixed, as the legs which support a bench.
Why of mankind -	Malvolio probably means 'ordinary' 'like another man' though we know that Viola is not so.
personage -	personal appearance.
squash -	unripe peascod which is soft and easily squashed: (peascod - the pod that holds the peas)
codling -	here an unripe apple (in present use it refers to a particular kind of apple)
'Tis with him .... water -	He is, as it were, at the turn of the tide neither at the flow nor at the ebb.
between .... Man -	midway between two ages; he is neither a boy nor has he fully grown into manhood.
very well favoured -	very comely or handsome in appearance favour (old use)-looks, countenance.
shrewishly -	sharply, and also shrilly.
Give me my veil -	As Olivia is mourning her brother's death, it is her custom to wear a mourning veil.
Your will? -	what is your wish? what is your desire?
Most radiant beauty -	Viola speaks in the flowery, fanciful style of the Elizabethan courtier.
I pray you -	Viola interrupts herself for fear she should be wasting her speech on someone other than Olivia.
con it -	learn it by heart (as an actor learns his speeches). The metaphor of an actor is taken up later.
sustain no scorn -	receive no scornful treatment while conveying the message entrusted to me.
compatible -	sensitive.
very compatible..usage-	sensitive to the slightest discourtesy or incivility.
modest -	reasonable ; moderate.
a comedian -	an actor; the metaphor of the actor (stage player) is kept up. Olivia seems to be apparently but not intentionally insulting the messenger, by calling him a comedian. But the messenger has earlier referred to his 'speech' and the pains he has taken 'to con it'.

However Olivia's question incidentally allows the irony of Viola's reply: "I am not that I play".

no my profound heart - 'no my most wise lady' ;

langs - long, sharp teeth of dogs, wolves etc, and the poisonous teeth of snakes. Shakespeare often associates malice with poisonous snakes.

Yet by ... I play - "I invoke upon myself the bitterest things that can be said of me if I lie in declaring that my character is assumed one".

I am not that I play - Another instance of 'dramatic irony'. Apparently what Viola speaks appears to be falsehood; but the audience knows it to be the truth. Viola keeps up Olivia's metaphor of an actor acting a part and replies to her in the same style.

usurp myself - impersonate myself.

you do usurp...reserve - 'you are guilty of misappropriating yourself' (by refusing to marry). Viola's point is that the beauty and accomplishment with which Olivia is endowed are meant to be enjoyed by the one who loved her and she has no right to keep them to herself.

from my commission - not my part of my message.

It is the more like to be feigned-it is all the more likely to be untrue. Keep it in do not deliver it; saucy - impudent

to make dialogue - Oliver says that she is not herself lunatic enough to be a partner to so silly a dialogue (skipping – frolicsome, flippant)

hoist sail - put up sail and be off. (Maria employs the metaphor of the ship and suggests that Viola may leave the room).

No, good swabber... longer - Viola keeps up the metaphor after the manner of Maria and tells her that she is going to stay on.

swabber - one who swabs, sweeps (with a brush called swab) the decks of a ship. (The word is here applied to Maria because just like a swabber who clears the deck, she tries to clear Viola out of the room)

I am to ..... longer - . I am to beat about here; 'to hull' is to lie without hoisting sail so that only the body of the vessel is seen above the water.

Some mollification lady giant - Pacify your aggressive protector, lady.

giant - ironically alluding to Maria's small size and fierceness. The allusion may also be to giants often guarding ladies in old romances.

Tell me ... messenger - This is rendered as part of Viola's speech in the earlier editions and may either mean (1) tell me your mind as to Orsino, whose messenger I am or (2) Are you willing to hear my message? - alluding to the earlier dismissive remarks of Olivia and Maria.

According to Warburton's arrangement of lines, these words are spoken by Olivia, asking "tell me what you wish to say", to which Viola replies in the next line that she has come as Orsino's messenger, to deliver his message, and not to

speak her own mind.

hideous matter	-	terrible message.
When the fearful	-	ironically refers to the poetical compliment with which Viola began her speech.
courtesy	-	preliminary ceremony.
Speak your office	-	Deliver your message.
overture	-	declaration.
bring no taxation of homage	-	do not claim or demand homage due as tribute.
I hold.....hand	-	I am a messenger of peace; olive branch is an emblem of peace.
as full ..... matter	-	as peaceful as they are important.
Yet you began rudely	-	referring to Viola's sauciness at the gate
my entertainment	-	reception given to me.
what I am	-	who I am.
what I would	-	what I desire; what my purpose is.
maidenhead	-	virginity, maid hood.
divinity	-	as sacred as a religious discourse.
profanation	-	something unholy.
Give us the place	-	Leave us alone.
we'll hear this divinity	-	Olivia plays on Viola's phrase 'divinity', and treats it as if it were a serious religious discourse.
text	-	the Biblical quotation, or the subject of your discussion. The playful allusion to religion in the next few lines should be noted.
A comfortable doctrine	-	The doctrine which you preach. ("Most sweet lady") is most comforting to the soul.
and much .... It	-	there is much scope for expounding that doctrine and enlarging upon it.
Where lies your text?	-	in what scriptures is this text to be found?
In what chapter?	-	Tell me in, which chapter of the scriptures and in which verse? i.e., tell me exactly where you got it from and what authority you have for it.
To answer .....method	-	To answer in the same style, i.e. in terms of theological expressions.
the first of his heart	-	it is the very beginning and the essential part of what is written in his heart.
It is heresy	-	it is falsehood ; (heresy is a theological term meaning a false doctrine). The word is used as a contrast to 'divinity', or the 'sacred doctrine' in the earlier line.

In using the words *Text, comfortable, doctrine, chapter, first, heresy* etc, Olivia has merely followed the mode of a religious discourse which was first suggested by Viola's use of the words *divinity* and *profanation*.

commission	-	here, instruction.
you are now.... text	-	you are digressing from the subject of your discourse.
We will draw....... picture	-	'I will undraw the curtain to display the portrait'. The custom of hanging curtains before valuable portraits in order to safeguard them against light and dust is

alluded to here. In Act I. Sc iii there is a similar reference,
"Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before them? Are they likely to take dust like Mistress Mall's picture".

Olivia here uses an apt metaphor. Her beautiful face is the rare portrait and her mourning veil is the curtain hung before it.

such a one I was this present- This line has been variously interpreted. As portraits of this period were usually inscribed with the age of the sitter and the date of the painting, Wilson feels that Olivia's inconsistent juxtaposing of "was" and 'this present' in the line is humorously intended. Deighton explains the line as follows: "this is what I was just now, though hidden by my veil, different from what you saw me, but not changed". Verity's interpretation is, 'that is how I looked a moment ago' (i.e before she veiled herself at Viola's entrance).

it is not well done? - Retaining the metaphor of a portrait, Olivia asks Cesario if the picture is not well - painted.

if God did all - if that is what you naturally are; if it is unaided by cosmetics.

ingrain - in fast colours.

Will endure - it will withstand any weather.

'Tis beauty .... on - it is Beauty itself, whose colours (red and white) are so well blended by Nature's own skilful hands.

Viola's spontaneous and sincere praise of Olivia's beauty shows that she is free from jealousy, the supposed weakness of women as they are often reluctant to acknowledge a rival's beauty.

Cruelest she - most unkind woman.

If you'll ......no copy - if you will allow such beauty to go to waste (when you die) instead of leaving behind you children who will, like a copy of your picture, resemble you in beauty ; copy - here, children.

It was a favourite idea of the Elizabethan poets that those who possess personal beauty should marry and through their children perpetuate that beauty. Shakespeare's Sonnets 1-17 treat this theme under different metaphors.

O! sir....... so forth - Viola's charge (in the previous line) is also a compliment to Olivia's beauty and Olivia, with good taste, playfully turns it aside feigning a half sarcastic indifference. Olivia plays upon the word 'copy' used by Viola and takes it deliberately and playfully to mean an inventory, a legal term.

The legal phrases such as *schedules, inventoried, particle, utensil, labelled, will* and *item* which Olivia deliberately uses in her reply, match well with those of Viola (leave the world no copy) in her accusation.

schedule -- (a legal expression) list or table of items especially as appendix to a document.

Inventoried	-	entered in detail (from the word 'inventory' meaning a detailed list e.g. of household goods, furniture etc.)
every particle .... will	-	every single item written on a slip of paper and attached to my will by a label.
Indifferent	-	fairly.

Grey eyes (then a favourite colour for women's eyes). The Elizabethans disliked very dark eyes or hair in women.

Lids to them	-	eye lids; in the context it is a humorous playing on 'lids' of pans.
praise	-	commend, as well as estimate or value.
I see... fair	-	An allusion to Lucifer's beauty in heaven and his fall through pride.
O such love ... beauty	-	such love as my master's cannot be over paid by your beauty, even though you are acclaimed the peerless queen of beauty.
recompensed	-	rewarded; nonpareil - unequalled; peerless.
fertile tears	-	copious tears.
sighs of fire	-	passionate sighs.
of great estate	-	possessing great fortune.

In voices well divulged..valiant- well spoken of as magnanimous. learned and brave ; 'well divulged' may stand alone and then it would mean 'of good reputation' .

dimension.... .nature	-	in his physical form.
gracious	-	attractive.
have took	-	have taken.
In my master's flame	-	with the same ardour or intensity of passion as my master feels towards you. The 'flame' and 'dying' suggest that Orsino is love's martyr.
a willow cabin	-	a hut of willow branches; the willow was an emblem of disappointed love.
my soul	-	Olivia (who would be the soul and life of Viola, if she loved her as her master did)
loyal cantons	-	songs of faithful love.
contemned love	-	unrequited love.
Halloo	-	'bless', here, call out repeatedly; shout.
reverberate	-	reverberating; resounding.
babbling gossip of the air	-	a reference to Echo, the nymph or to air itself which babbles everything like an old gossip.
you might...do much	-	you are capable of doing anything in order to win my love.
Above my fortune	-	above my position as a page – boy
Yet my state is well	-	I have nothing to complain of in my present situation.
To tell it	-	to tell me how Orsino receives my refusals; an indirect invitation to Cesario.
feed post	-	messenger who accepts tips ('post' means messenger)

My master... recompense	-	it is my master who needs rewards, the reward of your love.
Love make....love	-	may the god of love (Cupid with his leaden arrows) make the heart of him who will win your love as - hard as flint (flint very hard kind of stone found in lumps like pebbles)
And let..... contempt	-	may your ardent love then like that of Orsino now, find no better reception than contempt.
fair cruelty	-	beautiful, but cruel one
Thy tongue	-	your refined speech
actions and spirit	-	the graceful bearing, your mettle.
fivefold	-	in five different ways – through speech, countenance, well-shaped limbs, bearing and mettle, or it may mean five times louder than usual.
blazon	-	The heraldic proclamation of the armorial bearings, which was a mark of gentility; the announcement was preceded by a blast in the trumpet.
Not so fast .... Soft!	-	Not so hastily. (Olivia's maidenly reserve and sense of modesty compel her to check her wild passion for the young page whom she has not known before)
Unless the master were the man	-	A half expressed wish of Olivia that the master and the page should exchange places.
catch the plague	-	fall in love.
perfections	-	beauties, graces.
How now?	-	Olivia rebukes herself.
Methinks ..... stealth	-	This youth's beauty and graces seem to enter my eyes and bewitch me with a cunning force.
let it be	-	Let things take their course.
peevish messenger	-	obstinate, ill-bred messenger. (Olivia deliberately misleads Malvolio)
would I or not	-	whether I liked it or not.
flatter	-	encourage.
Nor hold ...... hope	-	Nor give him the support of hope.
If that the .....for't	-	A veiled invitation for the youth to come back the next day make haste.
Hie thee	-	make haste
and fear to find ....mind	-	I fear that my eyes have misled my mind (to love him) i.e. I fear my eyes will overbear my judgement.
Owe	-	possess.

Act II Scene I

Summary

On the coast of Illyria, Sebastian is seen conversing with Antonio, a captain who has saved him from the shipwreck. (We identify Sebastian as Viola's

twin brother.) During their short acquaintance Antonio has conceived such a liking for the young lad that he refuses to part from him. Sebastian does not wish to trouble Antonio anymore and so he expresses his desire to face his misfortunes. He discloses to Antonio his real name and his noble parentage. He is the son of the famous Sebastian of Messaline and Viola is his twin sister. They would have died together but for the captain's intervention. He believes that Viola is dead. Sebastian further tells Antonio that Viola was thought of by many as very beautiful, and that she resembled him very much (as they were twins) and though Sebastian would not praise her beauty in glowing terms, he would boldly assert that she possessed a noble mind. Antonio feels sorry that Sebastian had not been accorded a better reception, though Sebastian is grateful to him for his kindness in rescuing and protecting him from danger till then. But he disapproves of Antonio keeping him company any longer. He tells him that he is bound for Orsino's court and takes leave of him. Antonio has many enemies at Orsino's court. Yet impelled by his devoted attachment for Sebastian, he follows him.

Comments:

This scene, laid on the coast of Illyria, introduces two new characters, Sebastian and Antonio. Viola was hopeful of her brother's safety, after the shipwreck, while in this scene Sebastian almost despairs of Viola's safety. The details of his parentage, of Viola, and their striking resemblance given in this scene seem proper and timely.

The scene gives us a good impression of Sebastian. It also prepares the ground for further complication. The remarkable resemblance between Viola and Sebastian and Sebastian's decision to go to Orsino's court, give room for such complications. Yet there is also a positive hint at the possibility of the existing confusion clearing up by Sebastian being mistaken for Cesario (i.e. Viola in disguise). But, for the time being, our attention is diverted to Antonio's deep affection for Sebastian. His soliloquy which winds up the scene promises elements of danger and enmity.

The scene does not reveal too much of the future action but only what is essential, and though short, it has its bearings on the subsequent scenes, and is vital to the development of the plot.

Notes

my stars	-	the stars which ruled at my birth
malignancy	-	evil influence

distemper	-	disturb, infect
my determinate... extravagancy	-	my intended voyage is mere wandering
so excellent. . . .. modesty	-	such exquisite feeling of refinement
extort..... keep in	-	you will not force me to speak out (by asking many inquisitive questions) what I prefer to keep to myself.
it change. ... myself	-	good manners oblige me all the more to explain myself.
you must know	-	This account of Sebastian helps the audience to know more about Viola, Sebastian, their parentage, and of the shipwreck
which I called	-	which up to this moment I have called
Messaline	-	imaginary town, invented by Shakespeare
born in an hour	-	born in one and the same hour, that is, as twins
we had so ended	-	we had died together in the same hour (when the ship was wrecked)
breach of the sea	-	from the breaking waves of the sea
Alas the day!	-	What an unfortunate day!
esteemable wonder	-	(with) esteem and wonder
publish her	-	publicly proclaim about her.
envy	-	the most envious people
cannot but call fair	-	Cannot deny its excellence
salt water	-	(in) the sea
with more	-	with more salt water, that is tears
entertainment	-	treatment as my guest (now that I have come to know your high rank)
your trouble	-	the trouble I have caused you
murder me	-	that is, by refusing my request to follow you
undo	-	cancel
so near... mother	-	so near to weeping which is a womanly behaviour
upon ... tales of me	-	Upon the slightest provocation, my eyes (i.e. tears) will betray my soft nature
sport	-	an adventure, a mere pastime.

Act II Scene II

Summary:

On his way back from Olivia's house Cesario (Viola) is overtaken by Malvolio. With characteristic churlishness, Malvolio gives him the ring sent by Olivia and asks him to take it back. Cesario is surprised to hear that the ring has been left by him much against the wishes of Olivia. But he does not reveal his surprise. He understands that this is a device used by Olivia to encourage him to pay another visit to her. He refuses to take back the ring. Malovlio throws the ring on the ground and leaves the place.

Left alone, Viola picks up the ring. She realizes the irony of the situation caused by her disguise. Olivia has been misled to believe that Viola is a young man. Now Viola recalls vividly Olivia's strange behaviour, how Olivia had observed her closely and how distracted she was in her conversation. Viola interprets them quite rightly, as symptoms of Olivia having fallen in love with her. She curses her disguise which has been the cause of this complication and blames women's frail nature. But she is all pity for Olivia who is in love with a 'dream'. On her part, Viola as Cesario, cannot reveal her love for Orsino and being a woman, Olivia is bound to be disillusioned in her love for her. She wonders how the situation could ever be cleared up. Hence she leaves it to time to disentangle the knot.

Comments

This scene is significant chiefly for two reasons. It shows Viola's quick womanly intuition and the quality of her mind. Viola is shrewd and so she instinctively perceives that Olivia has sent her the ring under an imaginary pretext. She plays her part so naturally and without hesitation that it rouses no suspicion in Malvolio regarding Olivia's true intentions. Not only does Viola reveal her generosity in shielding Olivia but also she displays a rare delicacy; for she pities Olivia and does not want to enjoy the humour of the situation. Viola establishes her claim to be classed with the other heroines of Shakespeare's plays by her remarkable intelligence, rare delicacy and natural sympathy.

The other important feature of the scene is that it sums up the state of affairs at the moment and shows us the exact point which the Romantic plot has reached. Viola's soliloquy is the pivot of the play summing up the complicated, fantastic situation, attributing it to fortune and abandoning it to resolve. The final couplet presents the whole situation as a knot too difficult for Viola to disentangle. (But Sebastian having just been introduced in the earlier scene), we are called upon to foresee a positive outcome if it is entrusted to time.

Notes:

even now	-	just a moment ago
desperate assurance	-	hopeless certainty; that is, so clearly as to give no hope.
so hardy	-	so bold
come again .... affairs	-	come once more on his behalf
this	-	this message (not the ring)
Receive it so	-	'understand the message in that sense'
She took.... .none of it	-	Viola of course left no ring with Olivia. This reply

	is Viola's ready invention to cover Olivia's indiscretion.
threw it to her -	forced her to accept
so returned -	returned in the same manner (as it was given)
stooping for -	picking up
so much... ..her tongue-	She was so engrossed in observing me that it seemed that her eyes had deprived her tongue of the power of speech, that is, her eyes' preoccupation distracted her tongue from speaking fluently
In starts distractedly -	By fits and starts; unconnectedly
the cunning.... messenger-	Her love for me has suggested to her this cunning way of inviting me (through this rude messenger) to visit her again.
I am the man -	the man of her choice; the man with whom she has fallen in love.
She were better -	It were better
Disguise, I see...does much -	Viola apostrophizes disguise and says that disguise or hypocrisy (which covers much under a fair form) is the best instrument through which Satan accomplishes many of his purposes.
the pregnant enemy -	the dexterous fiend ; Satan the enemy of mankind.
does much -	accomplishes many of its purposes
proper false -	handsome but deceitful men
How easy .... forms -	How easy it is for those men who are handsome and at the same time deceitful to make an impression on the receptive hearts of women. Viola here makes use of the metaphor of sealing. As a seal imprints itself on wax, the deceitful, handsome men leave their image upon the soft and impressible hearts of women.
to set their form -	to stamp their image.
our frailty -	frailty which is inherent in womanhood (c/f; *Hamlet* "Frailty thy name is woman".
for much as ..... we be -	for being made of weak material (i.e.weakness) we are necessarily weak.
adge -	turn out
poor monster -	a reference to Viola's feeling that as things now stand, she is neither male nor female but a monstrosity.
fond as much on him -	foolishly dote on him as much
As I am a man ......love-	disguised as a man, I have no hope of winning my master's love
As I am a woman -	In my real character as a woman
thriftless -	useless, unprofitable

Act II Scene III

Summary:

The scene opens with the half - drunken Sir Toby fooling in his usual manner, his victim, Sir Andrew, in the late hours of the night. Feste, the clown

joins them, and his professional nonsense provides fresh jests. The two knights being in a mood of revelry call upon the clown to entertain them with a song. The clown's song brings in the 'catch', which disturbs the whole household bringing first Maria and then Malvolio to the scene. Malvolio has been ordered to maintain silence; but he carries it out in the same churlish manner as when he had returned the ring to Viola. Sir Toby with characteristic indifference and contempt pays no heed to Malvolio's order and has little respect for his person and authority. Malvolio withdraws from the scene rebuking Maria for allowing such 'caterwauling' in the house.

Sir Andrew puts forward the proposal to challenge Malvolio and Sir Toby offers to write out the challenge or to deliver it orally. Maria then discloses her more promising plan to fool Malvolio. As she can write a hand very much like that of her lady, she would throw in Malvolio's path a forged letter that would lead him to believe that Olivia is in love with him. The letter will contain certain instructions by following which Malvolio would appear like a mad man.

The two knights welcome the idea with much cheer. Maria leaves them warning them to be silent and to keep their plan a secret. The scene concludes with Sir Toby reminding Sir Andrew to send for more money.

Comments:

In this scene, which is in sharp contrast to the preceding scene, Shakespeare sets about developing the secondary plot. The scene opens in a festive, relaxed spirit. The merry atmosphere continues till the end of the scene except for the intrusion of Malvolio, who hotly rebukes the lovers of "cakes and ale" in an affectedly dignified and elegant style. The merry-makers turn the reproach to their advantage and Sir Toby and Feste pursue his argument in song reducing him to indignant interjections. He has gained the displeasure of each one of them and their conspiracy against him begins, the moment he leaves the stage.

Sir Toby and the clown try to enjoy puzzling Sir Andrew rather than be actually witty themselves. They are content to talk pure nonsense, simply to see its effect on the knight. The love song "O mistress mine ... ..." sung by Feste shows the "enjoy the present; seize the opportunity" theme perfectly attuned to the present laughter in comedy. It is the most excellent fooling inimitably fitted for the stage and the wit of Sir Toby and that of the clown excuse their excesses.

Maria's quaint stratagem of the letter shows that her keener insight has long since discovered - Malvolio's vanity.

Another point of significant interest in this scene is that in portraying Malvolio, it is often thought that Shakespeare is directing his satirical shafts against the Puritans of his age. Such a conclusion is unjustified; for Shakespeare only portrays human nature taking advantage of some of the characteristic prejudices and common jests of his age. Shakespeare knew his audience well enough and to depict the downfall of a pretender has a universal comic appeal. That Shakespeare is poking broad fun only at such pretenders is evident from the two statements of Maria. In one, she refers to Malvolio as 'a kind of puritan' and in the other as 'The devil' a puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but 'a time – pleaser'. She means to say that Malvolio is one of those unprincipled men who pretend to be puritanical or gay as fancy suggests or selfishness dictates. Hence one cannot hazard the opinion that Shakespeare entertained spite against puritans or that he intended to strike a blow at puritans though the delineation of Malvolio's character.

Notes

"not to be abed ...... surgere"	- To keep awake after midnight is to be up in the early hours of the morning; and to get up early is a healthy practice.
betimes	- early
"diluculo surgere"	- a tag from Lilly's Latin grammar meaning, to rise early is very healthy. (As this common proverb would have been understood by half the audience, Sir Toby's reference to it is only to play upon the complete ignorance of Sir Andrew)
can	- vessel to hold wine.
four elements	- earth, air, fire and water to which the four humours of the body (melancholy, blood choler and phlegm) were supposed to correspond.
Thou art a scholar	- Sir Toby's flattery is ironical and full of contempt.
stoup	- a large drinking vessel
my hearts	- my fine fellows
the picture of "we three"	- This perhaps refers to the signboard of an inn on which were painted two stupid - looking heads or two asses with the inscription "we three loggerheads be," the third being the spectator. Feste offers a genially insulting greeting to which (in the next line) Sir Toby as genially retorts.
catch	-part song, round (song for several persons or groups, the second singing the first line while the first is singing the second line.)
breast	- singing voice

Pigrogromitus	- These and similar fantastic words have no meaning. They are employed by the fool just to puzzle Sir Andrew.
leman	- sweet – heart
I did impeticos thy....bottle ale house	-These lines, like many other utterances of the clown, are thought to be sheer nonsense. But it may be paraphrased as follows: "I pocketed your miserable tip myself, for Malvolio was keenly on the watch (after my late truancy); moreover the lady of my choice drinks something better than ale, and the Myrmidons, the tavern we patronize is no common drink-shop."
impeticos	-The clown's expression is derived from "to pocket", "impetticoat" in reference to the long coats sometimes worn by jesters as a mark of their profession
gratillity	- the meager tip
whipstock	- the handle of a whip
my lady	-the girl who honours him with her 'white hand'.
the Myrmidons	-Perhaps the name of a high – class tavern frequented by the nobility in 'Shakespeare's audience'.
bottle ale house	- a low class inn
testril	- six pence
a song of good life	-Sir Andrew understands the expression to mean 'a song of moral character'. But by 'good life' the clown might have meant jollification or good company.
O mistress mine ……… will not endure	-Feste's song is probably Shakespeare's re-writing of a popular ballad of the day. It was a marked feature of the Elizabethan drama to introduce popular ballads into a play. There are a number of songs and ballads referred to in this scene from lines 72-110. Some of these songs become the favourite tunes of the theatre - going public of the day, which shows that in Shakespeare's time the English were a very musical race and that knowledge of music was wide-spread. This simple ditty is addressed by a lover to his beloved. It is poignant, though not melancholic, in mood. It has the true Elizabethan ring. The song adds much to the otherwise very different mood of the scene, and is in tune with the play as a whole.
sweeting	-sweet one.
Every wise man's.....know	-in reference to the saying that wise men have fools for their sons.
'tis not hereafter	-it is a thing of the present.
hath	-is accompanied by
In delay.... plenty	- delay leads to no good
sweet and twenty	-A term of endearment, meaning 'twenty times

sweet'. Some editors explain the term as, give me sweet kisses and twenty of them; and others think that it is a reference to the lady's age (twenty) formed in the same manner as sweet sixteen.

mellifluous -sweet as honey.

A contagious breath -a catchy song. (Usually contagious means pestilential, infectious. Sir Toby uses 'contagious' only to lead Sir Andrew to use a word he doesn't understand)

To hear by ... contagion -If we could hear through the nose, the clown's "breath" would be sweet and not unpleasant as contagious breath usually is.

dulcet -pleasant

welkin - sky

welkin dance - that is, "drink till the sky seems to turn round"

to draw three souls out.....one weaver - The power that music has over men in general is alluded to in this line. 'To draw a soul out' means to move intensely; "to draw three souls out" therefore means to be thrice as intense in its appeal

three souls -A reference to the theory of the medieval philosophers who held that a man has three souls: the vegetable, the animal and the rational.

one weaver -The allusion here is to the weavers' (who were mostly Calvinist refugees) love of music, especially psalm singing. If Sir Toby is thinking of their religious tendency, his remark is ironical. On the other hand if Sir Toby's remark refers to the weavers' love of music in general, the reference to 'there souls' is only a tribute to their immense fondness for music. Malone explains that the reference is meant to describe Sir Toby's catch as so harmonious that it would hale the soul out of a weaver (the warmest lover) of song thrice over; in other words, it would give him three times as much delight as it would give any other man.

dog at - clever at or good at

catch well - A play on the word 'catch' ; 'catch' is used by Sir Andrew (in the previous line) to mean 'song'. But the clown purposely relates it to 'dog' and here means "to snatch well".

knave -rascal, rogue

'Hold thy.... knave' -A contemporary catch. The point of the catch is that each of the singers calls the other a knave in turn.

constrained -compelled

This not the first time... knave-Sir Andrew means that he is a knave and had often been recognized as such.

If I hold my peace -If I keep quiet or am silent

caterwauling -mewing like a cat; here it means screaming and making much noise.

Cataian -a variant form of 'Cathayan', a native of Cathay

(China). The Chinese were supposed to be notorious for their skilful thieving. The word is here used playfully by Sir Toby as a term of reproach and contempt.

politicians -cunning ones; schemers. Perhaps Sir Toby means that Maria's reference to 'my lady' is a pretence, and that they are shrewd enough to manage her (Olivia).

Peg-a – Ramsey -The name of two old tunes of Shakespeare's time. J.O. Wood points out that in ballads a Peg - a Ramsey is a 'watchful hovering woman', and suggests that Sir Toby alludes to Malvolio's spoil sport nature.

Three merry .... we -This is the refrain or burden of several Elizabethan songs.

consanguineous -The word is derived from blood; here the expression means, 'related by blood'.

Tilly vally -an expression of contempt

'Lady' - A scornful repetition of Maria's words ('my lady').

There dwelt .... Lady - The opening line and the refrain of a popular ballad of 'Constant Sussanna'

Beshrew me - a mild curse

more natural - more naturally, with an unintentional pun on the word 'natural' in the sense of an 'idiot' or 'fool'.

O' the twelfth day of December-The opening line of a ballad which celebrated some battle which took place on December twelfth. But I B. Cauthen feels that Sir Toby is misquoting the first line of a familiar carol, "*The Twelve Days of Christmas*" which begins "On the Twelfth day". This explanation is interesting since it combines an oblique reference to Twelfth Night with a comic error - December for Christmas.

wit - common sense

honesty - Decency

gabble - talk fast in an unintelligible manner

tinker - tin plate worker, who travels from place to place and repairs kettles, pans etc.

squeak - short, shrill cry.

coziers - cobblers, tinkers and weavers; i.e. inferior traders.

remorse of voice - considerate lowering of voices. (Note Malvolio's affectation of fine language).

we did keep .... catches -Sir Toby does not care to listen to Malvolio's words of reproof. He takes pleasure in misinterpreting his words just to annoy him. By 'keep time' Sir Toby means the timing in music; whereas Malvolio's expression 'respect of time' was in reference to the late hours of night.

neck up - go and be hanged

round with you - plain with you; or deal with you straightaway.

harbours you - allows you to stay in her house

She's nothing..... disorders	- She is in no way connected with your disorderly ways
If you can....misdemeanours	- If you can divorce yourself from i.e. give up your ill doings
Farewell, dear heart ....dare not	-These lines sung alternately by Sir Toby and the clown are adaptations by Shakespeare from the first two stanzas of Robert Jones's "The first Book of Songes and Ayeres" (1600)
Nay good Sir Toby.............-	Maria's attempt to bring Sir Toby to order
This is ....credit	-Malvolio's ironical hit at Sir Toby "As a kinsman of Olivia, are you not ashamed of such behavior?"
Out of time, Sir? ye lie	- Sir Toby's angry retort to Malvolio's earlier words, "is there no respect......... nor time in you". But 'time' is altered as 'tune' by some editors.
Cakes and ale	-Proverbial symbols of jollity traditionally associated with feast days which were occasions of merry- making and the consumptions of cakes and ale. The Puritans disliked the custom and condemned them as superstition. (The Puritans were the members of a class of protestants that arose in the sixteenth century within the Church of England. They demanded reforms in doctrine and worship and greater strictness in religious discipline. They made a special point of austerity in manners and disliked any form of ostentation in rituals, ceremonies, dress and entertainments. Later they became a powerful political party. The term is also used for a person who is excessively austere and rigid in moral or religious matters; one professing too-strict morality.)
Dost thou think..... and ale	-This passage is often cited as establishing the view that Shakespeare is here satirizing the Puritans. Such a criticism is too general and unwarranted, as it is Molvolio's purtanism that is here being ridiculed and not Puritanism in general.
by Saint Anne	-The clown follows up Sir Toby's rebuke by swearing by St. Anne in order to provoke Malvolio further.
ginger	-used to spice ale
Go sir, rub .... crumbs	-"Stewards in old days wore chains as a mark of superiority over the other servants of the household, and one method of cleaning those chains was by rubbing them with bread crumbs". Sir Toby provocatively alludes to Malvolio's officiousness as steward, telling him to mind his business.
you would not ...rule	-supply the drink which encourages such disorderly conduct.
feelingly personated	-accurately portrayed
horse	- plan
of that colour	-of that kind

sport royal	- sport kings would enjoy
physic	- medicine
work	- take effect
plant	- place
construction	- interpretation
Penthesilea	- queen of the Amazons, a race (in classical mythology) of female warriors. Sir Toby refers thus to Maria, half in admiration of her and half in jest at her diminutive size.
beagle	- a small kind of hound; here a term of endearment.
recover	- attain; get
I am a foul way out	- I have wasted my time and money.
Cut	- a docked horse, i.e. a horse with tail cut short.
burn some sack	- warm and spice some sherry; (sherry – a kind of wine)
go shake your ears	- A common dismissive insult ; go you long - eared ass.
'T were a good deed...... of him	- To challenge him to a duel and then to *make a fool* break the promise and make a fool of him would be a classic jest. It would be like reversing the order of things like a man drinking, when he is hungry.
since the youth ...... my lady	-Since Cesario's visit this morning (The reference is to scene V of the first act.)
much out of quiet	- much troubled in mind.
let me alone with him	- leave him to me to deal with
gull him	- fool him. (The gull was thought to be a stupid bird)
nayword	- byword, password
gull him into a nayword	- play such a trick on him as to make his name a byword for stupidity.
a common recreation	- a common sport or jest
to lie straight in my bed	- i.e. what any fool can do
possess us	-give us information, put us in possession of your idea
exquisite	- subtle, exact
Thy exquisite....knight?	- The barrenness of Sir Andrew's mind is a source of infinite attraction to Sir Toby.
The devil a Puritan... time	- Maria has already said that Malvolio *pleaser* is sometimes a kind of puritan. She now adds that he is neither a puritan nor anything else except a time- server.
Constantly	- consistently
time-pleaser	- time-server
affectioned	- Affected
cons state...swarths	- learns by heart high sounding phrases and uses them profusely
swarth	- the portion covered in a single sweep of the scythe while reaping
the best persuaded of himself	- with the highest opinion of himself
so crammed	- so filled
excellencies	- excellent qualities

grounds of faith	- unshakeable conviction
vice	- weakness (here, Malvolio's vanity or self-conceit)
obscure epistle of love	- love letter of enigmatical character (enigmatical with hidden meaning as to puzzle)
expressure	- expression

Act II Scene IV

Summary:

The scene changes from Olivia's palace to that of Duke Orsino. Orsino is restless and calls for music – for a particular song. He is told that Feste, who had sung it on a previous occasion, is not there. The Duke sends for Feste. In the meantime the musicians play a favourite tune. Orsino calls Cesario aside and once again gives expression to his pangs of love. He asks Cesario's opinion about the music that is being played. Cesario remarks that the tune echoes the deepest feelings of the heart. The Duke is surprised that Cesario a young lad should speak in so masterly a manner. He assumes that he lad has fallen in love and asks Cesario if he guessed rightly and if so, who his beloved is and her age. Cesario tells him that his beloved is one who is very much like the Duke both in appearance and in age. The Duke at once advises him to choose as his wife a woman younger than him, so that she will easily adapt herself to him and will command his love steadily.

Cesario returns with Feste. Feste signs the song the Duke had called for earlier. The song highlights disappointed love and the pathetic end of a sad lover. No sooner is the song over than the Duke pays the clown for his trouble. The clown is quite surprised at the Duke's fitful moods and his sudden aversion to music and even to the company of singers.

Orsino desires to be left alone with Cesario. He instructs him to go once again to Olivia to tell her that what attracts his soul is the wonderful beauty with which nature has adorned her and that he loves not for her fortune and that he will not listen to any refusal whatsoever. Cesario then asks the Duke what would be the state of a lady who loves Orsino (as deeply as he loves Olivia) if she were told that he could not return her love. The Duke in reply asserts that no woman can love him as ardently as he loves Olivia. Cesario then tells the Duke of his 'sister', who loved a man deeply and yet never revealed her love to him. (Actually Viola expresses her own love for the Duke in a veiled manner which is at once modest, credible and pathetic.) The Duke becomes interested in the story of the 'sister'.

But Cesario changes the subject of their conversation and begins to speak about Olivia. The scene ends with Orsino instructing Cesario to give Olivia a jewel as a token of his love and that he should tell her again that his love will not accept any denial from her.

Comments:

The scene changes from the rollicking geniality of Sir Toby and his boon companions to the romance and gentle sentiment of Orsino and his court; from the foolish wooer to a noble one. The contrast between the third and the fourth scene heightens the effectiveness of both.

The emphasis of this scene is on the character of Viola; for the scene reveals nothing new but what we already know of Orsino. We meet the love-stricken Viola with Orsino for the first time

The musical background of the scene creates a romantic atmosphere which prompts both Viola and Orsino to express their feelings. But the clown's mild mockery of Orsino's inconsistent moods is in contrast with the prevailing mood.

Orsino's over utterance about lovers (including himself) are as "changeable taffeta." But Viola's gradual disclosure of her deep but inexpressible love for Orsino is most poignant and pathetic. She covertly expresses her love for him in two different ways: as Cesario's love for a lady of the Duke's years and as Cesario's sister's love for a man to whom she never revealed it. Her tenderness and self restraint perfectly express themselves in her self-portrait.

She sat like patience on a monument
Smiling at grief.

When the Duke is moved by the sister's story and becomes dangerously curious, Viola knows how to divert him by her half-humorous reply:

I am all the daughters of my fathers's house,
And all the brothers too: and yet I now not.
Sir, shall I to this lady?

Throughout the scene Viola humorously suffers the ironies and distresses that her disguise breeds and yet keeps always the relaxed, amused detachment of true humour.

Notes:

give me some music - As in the opening scene of the play, the Duke once again abandons himself to the luxury of love-melancholy, he is dreamy, pensive and restless

but	- just
old and antique	- quaint and old fashioned
relieve my passion	- relieve the suffering i.e. the pangs of despised love
light airs	- sprightly songs
recollect terms	- studied phrases, phrases collected with pains
unstaid and skittish	- unrestrained and excitable
save in…is beloved	- except in devotion to the thought of the beloved
It gives…throned	- it is an exact echo of what the heart feels
masterly	- with full mastery of the subject
stayed upon	- rested on lingeringly; dwelt upon
favour	- face
by your favour	- A quibble on the word 'favour' (i) if it pleases you (ii) on your face The Duke of course does not see the implication of the second meaning
complexion	- looks; appearance
still	- always
take herself	- take for her husband a man who is older than herself
wears she to him	-Adapts or adjusts herself to him (as clothes to the wearer)
sways the level	- There is a quibble on the word 'sway' and hence the two meanings of the line: (1) sway – hold sway; i.e. command his love steadily (level) (2) sway-swing: and 'level' means, then, 'in perfect equipoise'. Orsino feels that as men become stable later than women, they should marry women younger than themselves, so that by their adaptability, and their beauty which lasts longer, they will command and retain the wavering affection of men.
more longing	- full of longing and caprice
worn	- Exhausted
let still the woman.. than woman's are	- Many commentators think that this piece of advice is Shakespeare's private reflection on his own folly in having married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than himself. There is in the passage a note of pathos which sounds almost like self-reproach. But Shakespeare never made his characters his mouthpiece. So, we can safely assume that it is a characteristic utterance of the Duke and must be taken as expressing his own view rather than that of the dramatist. Orsino's generalization is the result of the analysis of his own feelings, which are "giddy and unfirm", for a few moments later he vehemently protests that a man's love is much stronger than a woman's (lines 96 – 101)
Let the love be	- let the woman whom you love be
bent	- the degree to which a bow can be bent without

breaking

cannot hold the bent	- cannot stand the strain i.e. your love will not remain ardent throughout
to perfection grow	- referring to the full loveliness of a woman when married to a man worthy of her
To die... grow	- to think that women's beauty should die at the very moment when they reach their full perfection!
spinsters	- women spinning flax or wool; virgins
free maids	- carefree, light-hearted maidens
bones	- bone bobbins used for lace making (bobbin is a pin on which thread is wound)
silly sooth	- simple truth
dallies...of love	-dwells lovingly on the theme of innocent love
the old age	- as in the golden age; or the good old days when all was simplicity and sincerity
Come away come away death	- Make haste hither sweet death (The song chimes in exactly with the prevailing mood. The first strange reminds us of the Duke's relation with Olivia and the second adds poignancy to the unrequited and hidden love of Viola)
cypress	-This may either refer to (1) a coffin made of cypress wood or (2) to a shroud made of 'cyprus crape' (a kind of cloth)
shroud	-garment in which the corpse is wrapped; winding sheet
truck...yew	-with sprigs of yew all about it; the yew, like the cypress tree, symbolized mourning and was often planted in the churchyard.
My part of death....share it	- my allotted portion, death; 'I am the truest lover who ever died of love'
strewn	- thrown
A thousand ...to save	- to prevent innumerable sighs being wasted over my grave
for the pains	- for your trouble
Truly, sir...paid	- Feste deliberately misunderstands the word 'pains' to mean suffering; hence, his rejoinder that sooner or later one has to pay for the pleasure.
Give me...leave thee	- A polite dismissal, as Orsino is not in a mood to listen to the clown's explanations
The melancholy...etc	- May the god of melancholy, i.e. Saturn take you under his protection
doublet	- waistcoat
changeable taffeta	- Short-silk which changes colour with the light, owing to the contrasted colours of the warp and woof. Hence a fit symbol of changeableness.
opal	- A precious stone that reflects different colours; here it symbolizes variability of mood. Feste means that Orsino's mind keeps changing every now and then like opal that changes colour with light.

men of such constancy	-said ironically, meaning, such inconstant men
put to sea	- go to sea.
that their business.. everywhere	- that may find occupation in everything; that may find in the constantly changing scene something to divert their restlessness.
for that's it...nothing	- for it is such a constant change that lends a charm to a voyage of no settled purpose. The Elizabethan age was remarkable for voyage and discovery. Many explorers discovered new lands and new sea-routes were established. The voyager and the explorer had necessarily to be of a roving tendency, with no definite goal.
yound	- (who lives) yonder, at a distance
sovereign Cruelty	- unrivalled cruelty; here referring to lady Olivia, who 'cruelly' refuses to return his love
the world	- people and their worldly values
prizes not	- values not
quantity of dirty lands	- her property; 'dirty' could either mean of no value or 'that which is made up of dirt or earth's soil'.
parts	-gifts or endowments like wealth,nobility, beauty etc
hold	- value
giddily	- lightly
The parts...as fortune	- Tell her that I pay as little heed to the gifts that fortune has bestowed upon her as I do to fortune herself; that is pay no heed to or be indifference about them.
that miracle....gems	- referring to Olivia's beauty
pranks her in	- adorns her with
say that	- suppose that; From this line on wards to the end of the scene there are many ironical statements. Viola's remarks especially and Orsino's too have for the audience a significance that is hidden from Orsino.
as great a pang of heart	- love as strong and painful
must she...answered	- Surely she must take that for answer; must be contented with it
There is no woman's sides... ...and can digest as much	- Earlier while advising Cesario, Orsino had said that women were more constant in their love than men. But now he vehemently protests that a man's love is much stronger than a woman's. This self contradiction is in keeping with the capricious nature of the Duke.
can abide	- which can endure
they lack retention	- They lack the power of retaining, the power to keep; here loving steadily. (Retention is a medical term meaning the body's power to retain its proper contents. Hence, here, 'retention' metaphorically means stability or consistency of purpose).
their love	- women's love
appetite	- mere craving or desire

No motion of the liver	- not a deep emotion that stirs one's being
the liver	- regarded as the seat of emotions
but the palate	- but merely a passing taste
That suffer...revolt	- that suffers from excess, disgust and consequent revulsion or aversion
the sea....	- "thy capacity, Receiveth as the sea".
all as (hungry)	- quite, altogether (hungry as). The medical metaphor starting with the word retention in line 96, is carried through in the following lines, by the use of words like appetite, palate surfeit, cloyment hungry, digest, etc.
no compare	- no comparison
owe	- Have for; feel towards
my father had...lordship	- A veiled reference to herself and her love for Orsino, which, of course, Orsino does not know.
love a man	- who loved a man
As is might....lordship	-Dramatic irony; 'as most likely it may be if I were a woman'.
A blank	- (The metaphor is that of a blank unwritten sheet of paper.) i.e. the story of her love is a blank one, and there is nothing to say of the consequence of her love.
She never told...at grief	- In these charming lines, Viola narrates the story of her own silent love for the Duke. Viola bears herself with a gallant and sensitive pathos that makes the scene the most beautiful in the play. She has no tongue but thought and her confession is as frank as it is modest
But let concealment...cheek	- She allowed her secret pangs of silent love to prey upon her youthful beauty, like a canker in the bud that slowly destroys the damask rose. The figure of speech used here is simile. Love grows like a flower in her heart and her silence is like "the worm in the bud" – canker which slowly destroys the bud before it blooms
concealment	- here, her silence (which conceals her love) which causes sorrow, as she cannot express her love even to the person she loves.
damask cheek	- Damask is light red colour produced by mixing red and white; here it refers to the rosy cheeks which indicates youthfulness and beauty. Damascus was famous for its red roses and the damask rose was much cultivated in England. Hence the reference is in accordance with the simile, and means 'her cheeks, which were rosy like the damask rose.'
She pined in thought	- she longingly brooded over her love which caused sadness in her heart and that caused her to waste away slowly.
And with a green...melancholy	-Indicating sickness and grief respectively; hence

	withered and depressed; green and yellow probably refer to the colour of fluid called 'melancholy', one of the four humours in the human body.
like Patience on a monument	- like sculptured figure of Patience on a tomb stone; that is, Viola, like the personified figure, was the very incarnation of patience. (It was customary to erect emblematic figures on tomb-scenes. A figure of patience was one such and it symbolized the patient resignation of the bereaved ones)
smiling at grief	- (qualifies 'she', though some editors think that it qualifies 'patience') cheerfully facing the misfortunes of the world with a smiling countenance and patient resignation.
Our shows will...	- we profess more than we feel.
much in our vow...love	- we (men) make great profession of love but lack the will to carry them out. (Viola has come to know by this time, that there is more show than sincerity in Orsino's love Olivia)
I am all the daughters....	-Viola indirectly leads the Duke to believe that her sister died of love without actually saying anything untrue.
Yes I know not	-said more to herself, hoping her brother may have been saved, she is uncertain about his fate
Sir, shall I to this lady...	- fearing that her emotions will betray her, Viola abruptly but with superb self-control changes the subject and distracts the attention of the duke who is beginning to scrutinize her with astonished curiosity at the passion beneath her words.
my love...deny	- my love can know no withdrawal, and can endure no denial or refusal.

Act II scene V

Summary:

The action of the scene reverts to the conspiracy against Malvolio. Maria's plan to drop a letter at a place where Malvolio is sure to find it is put into execution, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabin are in hiding. Malvolio comes along, trying to convince himself that the idea which he has entertained of Olivia's being in love with him is not absurd as at first sight it may seem to be his day-dreams include not only marrying Olivia and thereby becoming Count Malvolio, but also, from that exalted position reproving Toby. It is exactly in this mood that the plotters would have liked him to be. His eyes fall upon the letter which Maria has skillfully prepared for the purpose of playing a trick upon him. As expected by the conspirators the letter proves to be an added fuel to an already blazing imagination. Its riddling verse slows Malvolio down to a ludicrous deliberateness.

It is followed by prose (intended to be recalled by the audience when it is quoted by Malvolio later). The declaration of love has a few commands too-opposing Sir Toby, wearing yellow stockings, crossgartering and smiling always. Malvolio draws the most flattering conclusions from it as it had been intended that he should.

As Malvolio hurries to make sure of Olivia, and his greatness. Sir Toby most willingly surrenders his liberty to Maria and Sir Andrew joins, as in all things, in the offer forgetting that he is a suitor to Olivia. The scene concludes with the conspirators and the audience looking forward to hilarious gaiety in the succeeding scenes when Malvolio will appear before Olivia, behaving in an eccentric manner.

Comments

The action of the scene turns back to the comic sub-plot. The preceding scene has allowed that interval of time during which the plot against Malvolio matures. Now the time has come for the execution of Maria's plot.

One important point to note in this scene is that it is not Maria's letter which originates the idea in Malvolio's mind that Olivia is in love with him. For even before he picks up the letter and reads it, he is full of the idea of his mistress being in love with him, and he tries to convince himself that the idea is not preposterous. He willfully interprets certain marks of favour which Olivia has shown him as convincing indications of her love for him. One is almost led to wonder whether Olivia has gone beyond the limits of discretion in her indication of good will towards her steward. But we already know (e.g. Act I Sc. V) that it is her nature to be as considerate towards Malvolio as to Feste and she treats them as her companions rather than as servants. No one else mistakes her kindly attitude as absurdly as Malvolio does. This throws light on Malvolio's character. Self-love is the ruling passion with him. This self love destroys in him the genial sense of fellowship with mankind. He inhabits the isolated world of his own self where the object of attention and love is himself. It is grossly exaggerated opinion of himself (and the absurd affectations to which it gives rise) that make him a pitiable person in the hands of Sir Toby and his friends.

Maria the "noble gull-catcher" and the "most excellent devil of wit" is shrewd enough to see through Malvolio's self-deceptions. She makes use of a golden opportunity to take revenge upon Malvolio for his air of superiority, which

he invariably adopts towards all. Yet she knows how to do it in order to win Sir Toby's admiration. She has the native sagacity to please him as well as gratify her dislike for the steward.

Sir Toby adds unexpected humour to the scene with his robust indignation. He is fascinated so much with Maria's cleverness which outwits his, that he is willing to be her 'bond slave'. Sir Andrew confirms that he is a fantastical fool by stupidly echoing Sir Toby's words.

A point of minor importance to be noted in this scene is that Feste does not make the third of the party who are in hiding as had been originally planned but Fabian, a new character introduced in this scene for the first time. Shakespeare needed Fabian at a later stage in the action of the play and he possibly found this a convenient occasion to bring him to the notice of his audience.

In plot development, complication follows exposition (the introduction of characters concerned and the relation in which they are placed towards each other). This complication is present as much in the sub-plot (misleading Malvolio into a false belief) as in the main plot. In this scene the seed of mischief is sown in the shape of a letter and it is bound to give rise to fresh absurdities on the part of the unfortunate steward.

Notes:

Come thy way	-	Come along, come on
Signior	-	title used of or to Italians corresponding to 'Mr.' Sir Toby's ceremonious form of addressing Fabian. (Fabian is described as a servant of Olivia but he treats the two knights as if he were their equal.)
scruple	-	Fragment; the smallest bit, derived from the smallest weight in the apothecary's table of weights.
this sport	-	refers to gulling Malvolio, in the manner proposed by Maria, in the earlier scene
boiled to death with melancholy	-	Criminals were sometimes boiled to death in lead or oil. But Fabian is jesting here, for melancholy was considered a cold humour.
niggardly	-	miserly
sheep-biter	-	of an ill – conditioned cur which worries sheep; here a malicious or censorious fellow
notable shame	-	remarkable disgrace
bear-baiting	-	A favourite and fashionable pastime of the Elizabethans, of setting on dogs to bait or worry a bear tied to a stake. This was disliked by the Puritans. (Hence distasteful to Malvolio, who is 'a kind of Puritian')
fool him black and blue	-	humiliate him to the utmost extent; fool him thoroughly (by means of the letter)

it is pity of our lives	-	our lives deserve nothing but pity; it is a shame that we should live
little villain	-	(Maria) the little rogue ; said in a tone of endearment
metal of India	-	gold: here used as a complimentary metaphor, referring o Maria. Gold was proverbially associated with India.
box-tree	-	a wild tree, introduced into garden to form the border to beds of flower
practicing behavior... shadow	-	learning actions of how he could walk or carry himself by observing his shadow
for the love of mockery	-	as you love mockery
contemplative idiot	-	a self-centered fool who deceives himself idiotically. (The more Malvolio broods over or contemplates the letter. The more idiotic he will become)
close	-	keep close, lie hidden
Here comes the trout...tickling	-	A metaphor: here comes the fish (Malvolio) that must be caught by flattery (Maria's 'obscure epistle' which will flatter his vanity); trout is a kind of large fish.
tickling	-	to tickle is to catch the trout by stroking with the hand. The reference is to the practice of catching trout by tickling, especially in summer when the water in streams runs low
'Tis but fortune	-	"Malvolio is precisely in the frame of the mind which will make him fall an easy victim to the plot contrived by Maria. He is thinking of Olivia who perhaps has just shown him some marks of favour. In this affected mood, he finds the letter which confirms his delusions, even to the extent of bidding him touch fortunes fingers"
she	-	Olivia
(did) affect me	-	admired me, cared for me
should she fancy	-	if she should fall in love (with me)
complexion	-	character or disposition
uses me	-	treats me
over weening	-	arrogant and presumptuous
turkey cock of him	-	to be idiotically proud like the turkey cock. (The turkey-cock was a proverbial image of self-importance)
how he jets...advanced plumes	-	How he proudly he struts like the excited turkey – cock with its uplifted feathers.
Slight	-	'God's light' – a mild oath. (The interjections are not heard by Malvolio. But they constitute a sort of a complete dialogue.)
Count Malvolio	-	Malvolio imagines himself to have been raised to the rank of a Count by his marriage with Olivia.

The lady of the Strarchy.. Wardrobe - An unidentified allusion. It is most likely that Shakespeare's audience were familiar with the story of a Lady of a rank who married her servant either in real life or in some popular play or novel. "Yeoman of the wardrobe" was the title of one of the superior servants in great Elizabethan households.

Jezebel - A Biblical character; the proud and wicked wife of king Ahab. Sir Andrew has picked up the phrase 'as proud as Jezebel' and ignorant of the fact that she is a woman, applies it to Malvolio.

deeply in - well caught in the snare; or perhaps it is the metaphor of a person sinking deep into mud

blows him - makes him swell with pride

In my state - In my chair of state; in my throne (Malvolio perhaps sits down on some garden-seat and enacts the imaginary scene with his "officers" and "Toby")

stone bow - cross-bow with stones for bullets.

branched - ornamented with embroidery representing leaves and branches

day-bed - couch; sofa

brimstone - sulphur

humour of state - to put on an air of haughtiness as people in authority do

demure travel of - serious survey of those present; (Malvolio uses high sounding expressions)

as I would ... theirs - and that I should be pleased if they by their behaviour showed that they knew what their relation was to me

kinsmen Toby - Malvolio's familiarity in dropping the 'Sir' and his claim of kinship through his imaginary marriage with Olivia naturally increase Sir Toby's anger.

Bolts and shackles - latches and chains; here the words express Sir Toby's wish to throw Malvolio into prison

my people - my attendants

make out for him - set out to fetch him

I frown the while - In the meantime I adopt an austere expression

or play with my-some rich jewel -Malvolio here automatically reaches for his steward's chain and then realizes that he will be no longer a steward, and hence he checks himself and substitutes "some rich jewel"

coutesies there to me - (Sir Toby having been brought before 'Count'Malvolio's presence bows to him to show his respect courtesy)

be drawn from us with cars-Though we are forced to break our silence, i.e.,even if our silence were to be forcibly dragged out of us with the help of wild horses, or chariots drawn by horses...

yet peace - still, be silent

extend my hand - offer my hand

quenching my familiar smile- repressing or controlling the friendly smile

with an austere regard	-	with a severe and authoritative look
take you a blow	-	give you a blow
this prerogative	-	this right or privilege
scab	-	(a familiar term of insult) nasty fellow; scurvy fellow
we break...plot	-	we ruin or spoil our stratagem (sinews are the strong cords joining a muscle to a bone; hence breaking the sinews means disabling)
the treasure of your time	-	your precious time
employment	-	business i.e. what is this paper doing her? The word is merely used out of Malvolio's affection for grandiloquence
Now is the woodcock...gin	-	A metaphor, meaning "now is the fool going to fall into the snare. Woodcock is a game bird, which is proverbially known for its stupidity. Gin is the abbreviation of 'engine' and here it means, 'snare'.
the spirit of...aloud to him	-	May the impulse that governs eccentric behaviour inspire him to read the letter aloud. (Sir Toby and the others have not seen Maria's letter and hence their curiosity)
lady's hand	-	lady's (Olivia's) handwriting
her very C's...P's	-	Not all the letters mentioned occur in the address. Hence it has been suggested that the letter is addressed in the usual Elizabethan manner and runs as "To the Unknown beloved this, and my good wishes" and ended with the words, with "Care Present", and that Malvolio in his excitement omits the ending words.
contempt of questions	-	so certainly as to make any doubt ridiculous
By your leave, wax	-	Malvolio takes permission of the sealed wax to remove it and open the letter
soft	-	His exclamation of surprise and caution as he examines the sea.
impressure	-	the impression (on the wax)
her Lucrece	-	A seal-ring bearing the image of Lucretia. Lucretia was the wife of Tarquinius Collantinus. She was raped by Sextus Tarquinius. She stabbed herself to death. Thus she became a by-word for heroic chastity. Her miniature was used by damsels to seal their letters.
liver and all	-	with passionate conviction
lips do not move	-	I must not utter my love
the numbers	-	the versification
brock	-	badger, a stinking beast. Here Sir Toby uses it as a term of contempt in referring to Malvolio
I may command...adore	-	I may be superior in status to the person whom I love
But silence...doth gore	-	A simile; 'my unexpressed love like the knife of Lucretia (but without bloodshed) pierce my heart
M, O, I, A..........	-	A sequence of letters expressly designed to make Malvolio interpret them (as he does a little later) as referring to his name

A fustian riddle -	an absurd riddle; (fustian was coarse cotton cloth), hence worthless because it is sheer inflated nonsense.)
dressed him -	prepared for him
with what wings -	with what speed
staniel -	a kind of hawk
checks at it -	turns to fly at; to pounce upon it. The metaphor is from the popular game of hawking. The staniel is said to check its course and turn aside on being tempted with false scent, thereby allowing its true prey to escape. Here the forged letter is the false prey upon which Malvolio, the staniel, pounces.
formal capacity -	normal intelligence; right reasoning
obstruction -	hindrance
position -	arrangement
what should portend? -	(referring to M, O, A, I in the last line of the verse – letter) what could such an arrangement of letters suggest or signify?
O ay -	Sir Toby's punning echoes of two of the letters in the riddle
make up that -	put that together so as to make it resemble something in you
He is now at a cold scent -	A metaphor taken from hunting. It is followed up by Fabian in the succeeding lines. A cold scent refers to the point where the scent of the animal that is hunted becomes imperceptible or faint for the hound to pursue the search further. Hence the meaning here is that Malvolio finds it difficult to understand the riddle
Sowter will cry…as rank as a Fox -	The clumsy hound will surely 'give tongue' as though he had made a discovery or had caught the scent, though the scent is as strong as a fox's i.e. Malvolio will make it out in time though it is plain enough already.
the cur is… faults -	(the cur: ill-bred hound) 'fault' is a technical term in hunting. A hound is said to be at faults when it loses the scent of the hare or fox. 'Excellent faults' therefore means good in picking up the scent even when it is least perceptible.
consonancy in the sequal -	consistency in what follows; what follows does not agree
that suffers under probation-	This puzzle does not come out well under scrutiny
And 'O' shall end -	At the end Malvolio will say 'O' when he suffers for his presumptions. Johnson interprets 'O' as a hangman's noose.
make him cry 'O' -	make him groan
and you had an eye behind you-	punning on the word 'eye', and 'I' of the previous line
an eye behind you -	Fabian is referring to himself and his companions who are overwhelming without Malvolio knowing it.

detraction at your heels -	misfortune following you
than fortune before you -	In contrast to the fortunes you are pursuing
simulation -	puzzle
to crush this…my name -	with a little straining it might be made to fit my name
revolve -	think; reflect
In my stars -	In my fortunes
above thee -	superior to you
Some are born great…thrust upon them	-An oft quoted statement; Malvolio will surely believe that greatness is being thrust upon him.
Thy fates -	your fortunes
open their hands -	make you a generous offer
let thy blood…embrace them	- Let your courage be summoned up to accept this rare offer
cast thy humble slough -	Put off your, lowly character just as the snake puts off its slough (slough – the skin cast off by the snake).
appear fresh -	appear bright
be opposite -	be cross or angry
a kinsman -	referring to Sir Toby
surly -	unfriendly
tang -	ring
arguments of state -	speak dignified subjects like those discussed by politicians
put thy self…singularity -	assume the affectation of peculiar conduct; behave in an eccentric manner
commended -	praised
cross-gartered -	An Elizabethan fashion which was specially popular with Puritans; cross-garters were born both above and below the knee and so crossing at the back. Both 'yellow stocking' and 'cross garters' must have been chosen for their conspicuousness rather than for their significance
go to	-an equivalent of 'I tell you'
thou art made -	your fortune is made, you are a made man
To touch fortune's fingers-	to become rich and fortunate (Fortune is here personified)
after services with thee -	would exchange social positions; that is, take him as her lord and husband
champaign -	flat open country where there is a clear view
discovers not more -	shows things no more clearly (it is as clear as day-light
baffle -	treat with contempt
wash off -	discard
gross acquaintance -	low company
politic authors -	writers on politics
the very man -	The exact man described in the letter to the point of perfection
I do not fool…jade me -	dramatic irony
Jade me -	make a fool of me; (just like an unruly horse (jade),which throws its rider
excites to this -	calls not to me to believe this

she did commend	-	"We must suppose that Olivia did so to please Malvolio, and that Maria heard her, for really she disliked the colour and the fashion."
manifests...my love	-	reveals clearly her love to me
Injunction	-	authoritative order
habits	-	clothes
strange	-	reserved distant, firmly aloof
stout	-	obstinate and proud
postscript	-	addition to letter, as an after-thought
If thou entertainest	-	If you are willing to accept and reciprocate
let it...smiling	-	Malvolio would further befool himself by smiling in the presence of Olivia
becomes thee well	-	suits your appearance
still smile	-	always smile
give my part	-	give my shred
for a pension of thousand... the sophy	-	even if I am given a handsome sum by the generous Sophy. (Sophy-the Shah of Persia). This is a topical allusion to the bounteous reward received by Sir Anthony Shirely, an English ambassador at the court of the Shah of Persia in the year 1599)
I could marry...this device	-	A broad, open hint of Sir Toby's marriage with Maria at the end of the play
So could I	-	Sir Andrew forgets that he is Olivia's suitor and foolishly repeats all that Sir Toby says.
gull-catcher	-	catcher of fools (gull being a stupid bird)
set thy foot in my back	-	(as a gesture of subjection) 'Shall I be your slave for life'.
Play	-	wager, bet
tray-trip	-	a dice game in which one must throw 'three' to win
Shall I play...bond slave?	-	"Shall I stake and lose my freedom to you."
aqua-vitae	-	Literally it means 'water of life' here it means 'strong spirits'.
fruits of sport	-	the consequences of the plot or the trick
addicted to melancholy	-	being strangely depressed in spirit (perhaps referring to the restlessness of Olivia after Cesario's visit)
that it cannot...contempt	-	that it is certain to bring upon him her worst contempt
To the gates of Tartar	-	Wherever you like, even to Tartarus, (a classical name to the internal regions i.e.hell)
make one too	-	to be one of the party.

Act III scene i

Summary

Viola (as Cesario, the page) comes once again to Olivia to plead the cause of Orsino. Before she enters the house, she meets Feste the clown, in the garden. She asks him if Olivia is in the house. She also persuades the clown to inform Olivia of her arrival. Viola, when left alone, expresses her deep appreciation of Feste's art of fooling.

Meanwhile Sir Toby and Sir Andrew join Cesario in the garden. Sir Toby tells Cesario that Olivia desires that he should enter the house. But before Cesario can do so, Olivia herself comes into the garden with Maria. Viola greets the lady. Her complimentary expressions surprise Sir Andrew. Olivia dismisses Maria and the two knights, as she wishes to be alone with Cesario. Cesario calls himself Olivia's servant. Infact, he is Orsino's servant but Orsino is Olivia's servant because Orsino is in love with her. Hence he calls himself Olivia's servant. Cesario explains the purpose of his visit. Olivia is firm in refusing Orsino's love. Her petition to Cesario is of a different kind; Cesario should speak for himself. She readily confesses her rashness in sending him the ring. After a vain struggle to conceal her passion, she overleaps all limits of discretion, and openly declares her love for Cesario, and entreats an answer. Cesario feels pity (and rightly so) for Olivia. Olivia says that she will not detain the page – boy any longer; but she explicitly and emphatically expresses her love:

"*Love sought is good but given unsought is better*".

Cesario then tells her that no woman will ever have his heart (for she being a woman, cannot marry another woman). Olivia refuses to be turned down by Cesario. Under a false pretext that he might move her heart to love Orsino, she invites Cesario to come again.

Comments:

The scene opens with Viola's meeting with Feste which serves to bridge the interval of time that elapses between Act II scene V and the re-entry of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew in this scene. The dialogue between Feste and Viola strengthens our impression of the clown's character. Viola's words of appreciation not only sums up the duties of a court jester but they also highlight Feste's role showing him as an ideal jester.

The second part of the scene enables Sir Andrew to witness the favours shown by Olivia to the young messenger and so prepares the way for the comedy of misunderstanding in which Sir Andrew sees in Cesario a rival whom he must challenge. But the leading motive of the scene comes in the third part where Olivia declares her love. Vows of seclusion and mourning, dignity of rank and maidenly reserve are all flung to the winds and her passion utters itself in ardent phrases. It is Olivia not Viola who is pitiable in this scene, blushing for her forwardness in sending the ring, struggling to accept Viola's indifference

stoically, at last pouring out her love Viola does pity her. Her situation is kept well below the point of painful witnessing. A perfect emotional poise is maintained on the recurring irony of Viola's disguise.

Notes:

tabor - small side – drum

live by thy tabor - make your living by playing music

churchman - clergyman.

To see this age! - How clever the world is now-a-days!

cheveril - kid leather, which is soft and flexible

A sentence is but...outward- Just as kid-glove can be easily turned inside out, an intelligent fellow can twist a remark in such a way that it gives the opposite sense of what he intended.

dally nicely - play subtly

Indeed words are very rascals - words have become dangerous thing to deal with.

since bonds disgraced them- As people fail to keep their word i.e., their promise, it has become necessary to make a man give a bond so that one can be sure that the promise will be kept. Hence bonds have brought disgrace upon words.

and words...reason with them - By being constantly punned upon, the words have no true meaning; and therefore if I were to give you reason, I would be giving a false proposition. Hence I dislike giving reasons with them (i.e., words)

If that be to care...make you invisible -If 'I don't like you' is equivalent to saying, 'I care for nothing', you are nothing. Hence I wish you would take yourself off and make yourself as invisible as nothing.

and fools are... the bigger - To make a comparison, fools are to husbands as pilchards (small) are to herrings (which are rather big). The implication is that husbands are the bigger fools when compared with them.

Pilchard a small sea-fish

like the sun everywhere- Feste means to say that the wisdom of a jester, like the sun's bright light is seen and known everywhere.

would be sorry...my mistress- The clown says that he enjoys visiting Orsino and that Orsino is as much given to foolishness as is Olivia.

An thou pass upon me- If you cut jokes at my expense; if you make a fool of me. The metaphor is from fencing in which 'a pass' is a thrust.

I am almost sick for one - I am longing for one that has a beard, viz. Orsino

though I...chin - Being a girl, Viola would not want it (the beard)

construe to them - make known to them, let them know

out of my welkin - here the meaning is, 'out of my sphere of interest'.

overworn - very commonly used

craves a kind of wit - needs intelligence of a special nature.

He must observe...and the time	-	while jesting, the fool must take into account the mood or temperament of the persons, their – social position, and the occasion.
Check	-	a term from hawking. A hawk checks when she forsakes her proper game or the right quarry and follows some other inferior kind that crosses her in her flight.
Practice		profession
as full of labor... Wiseman's art	-	as difficult as the art of growing wise
For folly........	-	for folly (of a jester) when wisely displayed is fitting; acceptable
But wise men...their wit	-	But if men reputed for wisdom fall into folly, they bring their intelligenc' into discredit
Dieu Vous	-	God keep you, Sir.
Et Vous	-	and you also; your humble servant
encounter the house	-	go towards or enter the house. This mock ceremony is contemptuous. Sir Toby is given to extravagant language. Here he speaks as though the house itself were capable of motion.
If your trade be to her	-	If your business is with her.
Bound to list of my voyage	-	the port for which I am bound; (Viola gives as good as she gets.)
list of my voyage	-	The word "list" literally means stripe or border. Hence it refers to the boundary; here, 'the goal of my voyage'.
Taste your legs	-	make trial of your legs; another affected word used by Sir Toby.
understand me	-	Viola replies to Sir Toby with a playful quibble on the word in the sense of (1) stand under-support and (2) comprehend.
I will answer you...entrance	-	I will answer you, meet your wishes, by going and entering. Viola imitates Sir Toby's affected style and replies by using the corresponding forms of Sir Toby's verbs go (gait) and enter (entrance)
prevented	-	anticipated
Most excellent...odours on you!	-	Viola adopts an extremely affected style whenever she is formally speaking as the Duke's messenger. (This arouses Sir Andrew's envy)
pregnant	-	here, receptive
My servant sir!		referring to Cesario, calling himself her servant, in the previous line 'you servant' is a term taken from gallantry, issued by suitors and knights while speaking of themselves to the lady whose love they sought, and also by ladies in addressing those suitors.
lowly feigning	-	pretended humility; pretence to humility

was called compliment	-	was used in the place of courtesy
My servant sir…compliment	-	Olivia's implication is that it is a lie to call oneself another's servant out of mere courtesy. She wishes that Cesaiio was her servant in the romantic sense – i.e. her lover.
and his must…be yours	-	and Orsino's servant is your servant too. Since Orsino is your servant through his love for you.
Would they were…with me	-	I wish they were blank as empty sheets of paper rather than be filled with me. The 'blank' might also refer to the metal dices at the mint known as blanks which when stamped with the royal face become coins.
music from the spheres	-	heavenly music. This is an allusion to the Pythagorean belief that the eight concentric spheres containing the planets and stars produced by their revolutions a music which was inaudible to mortal ears.
After the last….here	-	after the enchantment your presence…worked in my affection (enchantment – magic influence)
in chase of you	-	after you, in pursuit of you
hard construction	-	adverse judgment, unfavourable interpretation of my conduct
To force that	-	for forcing that ring
In a shameful cunning	-	by means of an unworthy trick
Have you not….think	-	Have you not tied my sense of honour, my dignity, to the stake and hunted it to death with the most unchecked thoughts that a cruel heart can entertain? The metaphor is taken from bear-baiting. Olivia is the victim, teased and worried by the 'tyrannous heart' of Viola which is sure to pass adverse judgement on Olivia's conduct and will as a result despise her.
To one your receiving	-	To one who is so quick of perception and understanding like you
cypress	-	piece of thin (Cyprus) linen
bosom	-	It refers either to the part of the dress which is worn over the bosom (hence concealing the heart which is the seat of love) or to the bosom itself.
That's a degree to love	-	That's a step towards loving me.
a grize	-	a step
a vulgar proof	-	a common experience
tis time to smile again	-	If my love is hopeless, if you are unrelenting, I must accept the fact as cheerfully as I can.
I will not have you	-	I will not (can't) force

you to marry me. This is a poignant half-jest of Olivia.

When wit and youth...harvest	-	when you grow to be a man, possessing the maturity of mind. The metaphor of harvest is employed here.
proper man	-	fine, handsome man
Westward ho!	-	This and "Eastward ho!" were cries (up and down) of the boatmen on the River Thames. Each served as the title of a comedy of London life.
Grace and....ladyship	-	May God bless you and give you peace of mind
You'll nothing madam...by me?	-	You have no message for my master?
That you do think...you are	-	Two interpretations are possible: 1. That you think you are not in love with a woman; but you are. 2. That you forget your position (what you are) in falling in love with a servant
If I think so...same of you	-	Granted that I may be wrong about myself, I think you are not what you seem to be (i.e. not a page boy but a young lord)
Then think you...what I am	-	You are right in thinking so because "I am not the man I seem to be and I seem not to be the woman I am.
I would...as I would have you be	-	I wish you would return my love
for now I am your fool	-	for now I am the object of your mockery; as you are treating me like a fool.
O what a deal...lip	-	Even his scornful expression looks beautiful when he shows his contempt by the angry pouting of his lips.
A murderous guilt...hid	-	Love, like murder, cannot be concealed, (from the proverbial notions 'murder will out' and 'love cannot be hid')
Love's night is noon	-	The greatest secrecy that love can maintain is as open and clear to the lookers-on as noon-day.
maugre	-	despite
thy pride	-	your contempt and anger
wit	-	wisdom; prudence
Do not extort...clause	-	Do not perversely seek out an argument
But rather reason...fetter	-	But on the other hand you couple together two chains of reasoning; overcome that reason by this argument.
Love sought...better	-	If to seek love and win it is good, love that is won without seeking is better.
I have one heart...truth	-	My heart and thoughts are given to one person only.

Act III Scene II

Summary:

The scene changes from the garden to a room in Olivia's house where Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian are seen conversing with each other. Sir Andrew tells Sir Toby of his decision to quit the place as he has seen Olivia openly declaring her love for Cesario. He is jealous of the favours shown by the countess to the page-boy. He feels that it is an indication of her indifference towards him. Fabian tells him that Olivia's apparent partiality for Cesario was meant to rouse Sir Andrew's valour and to see if he really loved her. She expected Sir Andrew to challenge the youth in her presence. Since Sir Andrew had fallen short of her expectations, the only way to redeem himself is to challenge Cesario to a duel. Sir Toby urges Sir Andrew to write out the challenge. He assures him that he would deliver the challenge to Cesario. Sir Andrew accepts the suggestion and leaves them, promising to meet them later.

As soon as Sir Andrew leaves them born Sir Toby and Fabian laugh heartily at his idiotic venture, as they know Sir Andrew to be a coward. Fabian also remarks that Cesario looks too gentle to be a fighter.

Maria comes in to tell Sir Toby and Fabian that Malvolio following the instruction in the letter, has worn yellow stockings and he is Cross-gartered and that he appears smiling all the time. Sir Toby and Fabian are very much amused. Accompanied by Maria, they hurry to see Malvolio's strange behaviour and unusual dress.

Comments

A new element is introduced into the plot, namely, the design of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew against Viola. This prepares the audience to anticipate fresh complications of much interest in the future action of the play. Sir Toby's project of the duel is a piece of mischief – making for the sake of fun. The audience waits curiously or rather wonders what manner of a challenge the cowardly knight will write out.

The entry of Maria with the news of how Malvolio has observed "every point" of the letter indirectly prepares the audience to meet Malvolio, who imagines himself to be "Count Malvolio" in the succeeding scenes. Fabian and Sir Toby are invited not to feed their revenge but to laugh heartily. It is an invitation to the audience too.

dear	-	dear angry fellow
do more favours	-	show more kindness
argument	-	proof
I will prove it legitimate	-	I will prove it (that you are an ass) in a logical manner, authorized by law
And they	-	judgement and reason
Grand jury-men	-	The jury men assist the judge to decide the case
They have…Noah was a sailor	-	Sir Toby says that it is sufficient if Fabian makes a statement on oath without giving further reasons as oaths are taken to be sufficient guarantee of true evidence since Noah's days
since Noah was a sailor	-	This is an instance of hyperbole or exaggeration, meaning, from time immemorial; since the days before the flood in which Noah (a Biblical character, referred to as a just man) alone escaped with his family in the Ark (ship) which he built by God's command.
dormouse valour	-	latent courage; courage that was sleeping like a dormouse (a kind of mouse which sleeps throughout winter)
fire	-	enthusiasm
liver	-	The supposed seat of passions but here, with reference to courage.
accosted	-	attacked, addressed
fire-new from the mint	-	freshly coined from the mint, brand new.
hanged…dumbness	-	dumbfounded him; compelled him to be silent
balked	-	neglected; you had let go the opportunity (causing disappointment to Olivia)
double gilt…opportunity	-	double gilding (as of gold plated metals) this doubly favourable opportunity.
you are now sailed…opinion	-	you have moved into that region of cold indifference in Olivia's opinion. The metaphor here, is that of a ship lost in the cold northern region.
the north	-	The Arctic region, where it is extremely cold (here it means the cold frosty region of discredit, instead of the sunshine of favour).
you will hang…lady's opinion	-	Olivia will look down at you with disregard and contempt as if you were an icicle which hangs on the beard of a Dutch voyager in the polar regions. The lines contain a topical allusion. The reference is to the Arctic voyage of William Barentz, a Dutchman from Friesland round the north where he discovered Nova Zembla in 1596.
laudable attempt either of valour	-	praiseworthy deed of courage

or policy	-	or by 'clever strategem' as Fabian means.
policy	-	'despicable intrigue' (as Sir Andrew means).
had as lief	-	would as willingly
Brownists	-	The puritan flowers of Robert Browne. Sir Andrew enjoys attacking the Puritans.
Politician	-	The word is generally used in a depreciatory sense as schemer, intriguer etc.
challenge me	-	let me see you challenge
to fight	-	the motive being, to fight (with Cesario)
In a martial hand	-	In a handwriting that shall look like that of a soldier; a large bold handwriting
curst and brief	-	sharp, fierce and curt.
eloquent and full of invention	-	powerfully written and full of matter.
with the licence of ink	-	write freely, more freely, than you dare to talk.
If you thous't him	-	If you address him as 'thou'; 'thou' towards strangers who were not inferiors was an insult.
bed of Ware in England	-	This is a famous large carved oak-bedstead measuring 7'6" in height and 10'9" in length and width. It is said to have been displayed in The Victoria Albert Museum, London.
Let there be gall in it	-	Here, it means, let there be a good deal of bitterness in your letter. (Vegetable galls like the oak gall were used in ink making)
goose pen	-	goose quill; or the pen used by a 'goose' (the stupid bird) i.e. fool or a coward.
at thy cubiculo	-	at your bed room
dear manakin	-	a puppet you enjoy manipulating; 'dear' could also mean 'costly' as seen in Sir Toby's reply in the next line.
rare letter	-	a wonderful specimen of a letter
oxen and wain ropes ..... together	-	no force on earth can drag the two to fight a duel
blood in liver	-	The liver was supposed to be the source of the blood. Therefore white bloodless liver was a sign of cowardice.
clog	-	impede
anatomy	-	body ; Sir Toby says it with contempt; hence the expression may mean 'skeleton' also
his opposite	-	his adversary, opponent
youngest wren of nine	-	The wren (a small bird) generally lays nine or ten eggs at a time and the last hatched of all birds is usually the smallest and the weakest of the whole brood. Sir Toby is alluding to the smallness of Maria in a very humorous and subtle way.
the spleen	-	here, a fit of violent laughter. The spleen was supposed among its other emotional

		functions, to govern laughter
laugh	-	laugh until your sides ache with pain.
yond	-	yonder
gull Malvolio	-	the foolish Malvolio
a very renagano	-	renegade, i.e. a deserter of his faith, especially Christianity
that mean to be believing	-	who wishes to be redeemed, who expects salvation by believing the true faith
Impossible passage of grossness	-	passages (used in the sense of passages from the Scripture) of such gross impossibility
villainously	-	extravagantly
pedant	-	scholar a church pedagogue, who having noschool of his own, teaches in the church
He does smile... of the Indies	-	Maria thus describes to Sir Toby Malvolio's behaviour under the influence of the letter, dropped by her.

Malvolio has been smiling, while smiling there are formed on either side of his mouth, curves — the winkles, resembling as Maria says, "a set of straight lines drawn through a point on a map or chart to indicate the course of a ship sailing continuously in a direction".

The 'new map' was a map of the world drawn by Edward Wright and published in 1600. The treatment of India and the East is fuller and more accurate than in any previous map and hence the "augmentation" (i.e. shown morefully than before). Topical allusions of this kind are useful in fixing the date of composition of Shakespeare's plays.

Act III Scene III

Summary :

The scene is laid in a street in the city of Illyria. Antonio is seen once again with Sebastian. He has followed Sebastian (as he had resolved to do earlier) (Act II, Sc. I) impelled by the fear that left to himself, Sebastian may get into dangers in a strange land. Sebastian is grateful to Antonio for his service and suggests that they should spend the time looking at ancient monuments of the town. Antonio asks Sebastian to excuse him for not keeping him company as he is afraid of exposing himself to danger. He had once fought in a battle against Orsino's ship. While all his fellow citizens had repaid to the Duke what had been taken, he had not done so. Hence if he is seen in the streets, he might be arrested and imprisoned.

Antonio lends his purse to Sebastian so that the latter can buy what attracts his fancy. He takes leave of Sebastian telling him that he would meet him at the "Elephants'.

Comments

Like the previous scene (Act II sc.i) this scene too reveals nothing prematurely. Antonio's loyalty is well — motivated by his concern for Sebastian and therefore does not appear as dotage. The affectionate exchange of greeting stresses the theme of friendship which becomes another aspect of love. Antonio's history marks him as a brave soldier, impetuous but not lawless. His act of lending his purse to Sebastian reveals his trust in Sebastian and his unchecked generosity.

The arrival of Sebastian in the town brings him into closer relationship with the main current of events. The audience can anticipate sooner or later, confusion resulting from mistaken identity.

Notes :

Since you ...pain	-	since you consider the pain as pleasure
chide you	-	obstruct you
field steel	-	Dagger
spur me forth	-	goaded me on
though so much... voyage	-	although I love you enough to undertake a longer journey on your behalf.
Jealousy	-	here, anxiety (about the danger that might befall Sebastian)
skilless	-	here, the word means 'ignorant of' or,'unfamiliar' to
arguments of fear	-	because of the possibility of danger.
set forth	-	set men on
shuffled off with	-	lightly rewarded with
uncurrent pay	-	worthless payment as of debased or counterfeit coin (i.e., merely by means of the word 'thanks')
my worth	-	my assets, possessions or wealth
do renown this city	-	make this city renowned
Count his galleys	-	count's galleys (Orsino's warships)
It would... answered	-	any preparation I make would not be accepted i.e. they would insist on my debt.
the quality... quarrel	-	the prevailing circumstance the nature of the quarrel
bloody argument	-	argument leading to bloodshed
Traffic's sake	-	for the sake of trade
stood out	-	strongly objected to the restitution being made
lapsed	-	taken unawares

Do not ... too open	-	Do not be seen in frequented parts of the town
the Elephant	-	a common inn-sign or perhaps the name of an inn.

Act III — Scene IV

Summary:

The scene is laid in Olivia's garden. Olivia who is deeply in love with Cesario, has sent for him and waits for his arrival. She sends for Malvolio whose serious nature, she feels, will suit her present sad mood. Maria warns her lady that Malvolio, is in a strange mood and that she suspects him to be a possessed man. Malvolio, having acted upon the letter dropped by Maria, is wearing yellow stockings, is cross gartered and keeps smiling. Malvolio quotes lines from the letter he has picked up; but Olivia, not knowing anything about the letter thinks that Malvolio has become insane. Her conversation with Malvolio is interrupted by the announcement of Cesario's arrival. Olivia gives the command that some of her people should look after Malvolio (whom she believes to be mad) as she would not like to see him come to harm.

Olivia leaves him to meet Cesario. Malvolio believes that Olivia has put him in the care of Toby on purpose, for he has been instructed in the letter to be 'opposite with a kinsman' and to be 'surly with servants'. Sir Toby and Fabian come there. The two men and Maria humour the love-sick Malvolio who soon leaves them as they are not of his 'element'. Sir Toby, Fabian and Maria are delighted to see that the letter has affected Malvolio, more than they expected. Sir Toby decides to bind Malvolio and to put him in a dark room.

Sir Andrew comes in with the written challenge to Cesario. Sir Toby reads it to the company and agrees to give it to the page boy. Sir Andrew must wait for his turn to fight Cesario. After Sir Andrew leaves the place, Sir Toby tells Fabian that he has no intention of delivering the challenge as it is very poorly written and will not impress the youth. Instead, Sir Toby will deliver it orally.

Olivia and Cesario appear on the scene. Olivia expresses her deep love for Cesario once again. The page boy, however, desires that she should love the Duke. Olivia, imploring Cesario to come again leaves the place. Sir Toby's inventive brain thinks of a new plan to fool Sir Andrew. He approaches Cesario and tells him that Sir Andrew, his opponent awaits him in the orchard to fight a duel. Cesario does not understand who the enemy could be and his motives in

challenging him. He entreats Sir Toby to find out the cause of his opponent's anger against him. Sir Toby goes away, leaving Cesario to Fabian. Fabian takes the chance to instill more fear into Cesario's heart by describing to Cesario what a great fighter Sir Andrew is. Meanwhile Sir Toby impresses Sir Andrew on the bravery and skill of Cesario as a fencer. These reports terrify Sir Andrew who wants to withdraw from the combat. He is even prepared to offer his horse as a gift to Cesario provided Cesario promises to withdraw. Viola (i.e. Ceserio) on her part is anxious as the situation comes very near to disclosing her identity, for she does not know how to handle a sword. Sir Andrew, convinced by Sir Toby that Cesario will not hurt him, draws his sword. At this juncture they are interrupted by the arrival of Antonio, the sea-captain, who, mistaking Cesario for Sebastian, his friend comes to his rescue. Sir Toby is prepared to meet Antonio in a fight. But there is confusion as Antonio is arrested by the Duke's officers on some charge.

Antonio asks Cesario for his purse, still believing Cesario to be Sebastian. Cesario is surprised. He expresses his genuine desire to help Antonio by sharing the little money he has, as his token of gratitude for having protected him from danger. Antonio is unable to believe his ears when he hears Cesario denying any previous acquaintance with him. In his exasperated condition he describes passionately how he had rescued the youth from death and has served him with devotion for which the youth has not been grateful. The officers hurry him off. Viola begins to think deeply on the words of Antonio. She feels that Antonio has surely mistaken her for her brother. She is half hopeful of her brother's survival and wishes her hope would prove a reality.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, having witnessed the event, accuse Cesario of ingratitude and dishonourable behaviour. Sir Andrew hastens after Cesario to beat him, while Fabian and Sir Toby laugh heartily at him,

Comments

This scene marks an important stage in the development of the plot. No further complications in the affairs of the characters concerned are possible. In the scenes that follow, the dramatist resolves the complications and solves the problems thus created.

This scene is composed of four principal situations: the first in which Malvolio's delusion is central; the second, where Olivia's unawareness of Cesario's identity is central: the third, where both Viola and Sir Andrew

are unaware of Sir Toby's practice and the fourth, where Antonio mistakes Cesario for Sebastian again.

The interview between Malvolio and Olivia is a comic one, vigorously and economically dramatized. The melancholic Olivia confronting the smiling Malvolio is indeed comical. She is sad because she is in love but not with Malvolio, as he thinks. The key note of the comic situation is Malvolio's invincible assurance that Olivia loves him. He hardly perceives that he is made an ass. His soliloquy lets us anticipate his clash with Sir Toby. Sir Toby's diplomacy and cajolery in dealing with Malvolio is much funnier than the expected roughness in his dealing with Malvolio. Malvolio is allowed to gradually move away from the scene while we are told about Sir Toby's decision to bind him and put him in a dark room.

Sir Andrew arrives and there is no gap between one absurdity and the next. Sir Toby's intention to create mischief in order to ridicule Sir Andrew, becomes the motive force of the scene. Sir Toby thus directs the duel. He describes each adversary to the other with inventive force. Sir Andrew's challenge makes him the butt of a joke. Viola shows natural anxiety but not terror. Antonio's intervention is welcome for many reasons. It saves Viola from revealing her identity; It is a relief; it is a surprise and it neatly unites Viola's adventures with Sebastian's. Another surprise follows — the arrest of Antonio, though we have been informed earlier of this danger. Antonio's mistaking Cesario for Sebastian prepares us for the denouement in the following scenes. The emotional response of the audience as Antonio asks for his purse and Viola denies all knowledge of it, is a mixed one. There is sympathy for the high-principled man, the loving friend Antonio; yet we are aware that it is all a mistake. We feel hopeful as Viola does, regarding Sebastian's safety which becomes the most important factor in the resolution of the complication.

Like the main plot, the sub-plot too reaches its climax in this scene when Malvolio's prosecutors resolve to put him in a dark room as a confirmed lunatic.

The scene throws further light on the traits of each character; the inventive genius of Sir Toby, his love for mischief, Sir Andrew's cowardice, Viola's generosity, Antonio's loyalty, Fabian's sense of humour and Maria's shrewdness and readiness for fun and enjoyment – these are skillfully brought out.

Notes

him	-	Cesario, the page boy
He says he'll come	-	suppose he says he will come
What bestow of him	-	What gift shall I give him (of-on)
For youth is .....borrowed	-	from the proverb 'better' to buy than to 'borrow'
Sad and civil	-	sober and polite
And suits ....fortunes	-	(he) is just fit to be the servant of a person in my position, she being sad because of her unrequited love.
Does he rave	-	does he talk like a madman? (i.e, talk without any coherence .of ideas)
tainted	-	affected, unsound
I am as mad....equal be	-	Olivia is addicted to melancholy while Malvolio does nothing but smile. Hence his madness is beign merry while Olivia's is being sad
Sad occasion	-	serious matter
Sad lady....this cross Gartering	-	Malvolio's 'sad' means 'melancholy' or 'sorrowful', which might be the result of obstruction in the blood. (due to crossgartering) causing it to flow slowly, which gave him pain
sonnet	-	lyric; here the pobular ballad 'please one and please all'.
Please one and please all	-	If Malvoilo can please one (Olivia) that is for him as good as if he pleased all
Not black.....my legs	-	An antithesis, with an allusion to a then popular ballad tune called, 'Black and Yellow'.
black in mind	-	melancholy (which was supposedly caused by black bile); 'yellow in my legs' refers to his wearing yellow stockings.
sweet Roman hand	-	the Italian style of writing (as contrasted with traditional cursive English script).
to bed	-	i.e. to sleep off his mental disturbance (Malvolio understands it as an amorous invitation).
ridiculous boldness	-	absurd audacity
'Be not afraid of greatness'	-	This and the following lines within quotations are passages from the letter which Malvolio quotes
Heaven restore thee	-	Not knowing anything of the letter, Olivia comes to the conclusion that Malvolio is mad. So she wishes that God should bring Malvolio back to his senses.
Thy yellow stocking?	-	Malvolio's familiar form of address takes Olivia by surprise. Hence her repetition

		of his words, She wonders who could have commended his present dress, since she never did so
Am I made?	-	Have I really grown — rich?
Midsummer madness	-	The height of madness. The heat was most intense at the time of mid-summer and so it was believed that "the brain, being heated by the intensity of the sun's rays, was more susceptible of those flights of imagination which border on insanity than at any other period of the year.
Entreat him back	-	Request him to go back
Looked to	-	Taken care of
miscarry	-	Come to harm
For the half ... dowry	-	Even if I were to receive, in exchange of that, half my dowry.
Come near me	-	"Understand me; know who I am".
No worse man ... look to me!	-	No less a person than Sir Toby, to attend on me!
This concurs...letter	-	The instruction given by Olivia (in the previous line) agrees with what was written in the letter
A sad face...so forth	-	The letter does not really contain these hints described by Malvolio!.
slow tongue	-	words uttered slowly and deliberately
In the habit	-	literally the expression means "in the dress" but here it probably means "in the fashion".
Sir of note	-	person of high rank or a man of importance.
limed	-	Caught; the expression comes from the practice of catching birds with birdlime.
Fellow	-	Malvolio interprets this word as 'equal'
nor after my degree	-	Olivia did not address him after his rank as a 'steward'
adheres	-	fits in correctly
no dram of a scruple	-	not the slightest suspicion of doubt
no scruple of a scruple	-	not the least doubt. There is a word play on the second 'scruple'. The first and the last 'scruple' should be understood in the moral sense i.e. as 'doubt': and the second scruple refers to the weight or measure, 'the third part of a dram'.
incredulous or unsafe	-	incredible or undependable
full prospects	-	complete realization
drawn in the little	-	a quibble meaning (1) 'make the subject of a miniature portrait' and (2) 'contracted into small compass'.
Legion himself	-	Continuing the idea contained in the previous line. The reference is to

the Gospel of St.Mark V 8-9 where the 'unclean spirit' being asked what his name was, replied 'My name is Legion; for we are many'.

Go off - Malvolio now begins to act upon the instructions of the letter. He is trying to be 'opposite with a kinsman'.

Private - privacy; own company

the friend - the devil that has possessed him.

What, man... mankind - Sir Toby, Maria and Fabian get together to make a madman of Malvolio. They treat him as if he were possessed by the devil... In these lines especially, Sir Toby, with the intention of exasperating Malvolio still further, asks him to cherish no love for the devil keeping in mind the fact that the devil is Man's enemy, and therefore to set him at defiance.

La you - Look you: an exclamation once frequent in a woman's Mouth

takes it a heart - takes it to heart (as we now say)

bewitched - possessed

for more... say - for more money than I can say i.e., for anything

No way... gentleness - The only way of dealing with him is to be gentle with him.

will not ...used - will not allow himself to be roughly used.

my bawcock - my fine fellow! (from the French *beau cup* meaning 'fine cock') - here a term of endearment

chuck - another burlesque term of endearment. Meaning chicken

Sir! - The single word uttered with gravity by Malvolio indicates his objection to being talked to in the way Sir Toby was talking

What, man... Satan - Why man ! it is not suitable for a man of your dignified character to play games with Satan.

gravity... dignity, sobriety - here referring to Malvolio who is supposed to be sober and dignified

play at cherry – pit - to be on familiar terms. The expression is taken from a children's come of throwing cherry stones into a hole.

Foul colier - Dirty coalmen were proverbially associated with the devil for their blackness and

		dishonest dealings.
Get him... to pray	-	Maria's suggestion that Malvolio may be saved and be freed of the devil which is now possessing him.
Minx!	-	You pert monkey here the term is one of mild reproach – you impudent woman
he will... godliness	-	He will not listen to anything that has the flavour of virtue or godliness
shallow things	-	Here, people having no worth
I am not of your element	-	I belong to a higher order of creation
You shall... hereafter	-	You shall have occasion to learn more about me
Is't possible	-	Is Malvolio such a fool as to believe all these things?
If this were...fiction	-	In order to lay stress upon the extent to which Malvolio has been fooled, Fabian says that the whole thing is so incredible that if it were acted upon a stage he would have considered it as totally unreal or fictitious.
genius	-	soul or spirit (literally it means the guardian spirit presiding over him)
take air and taint	-	become known and be spoiled or perhaps grow stale through being neglected.
have him in a dark room and	-	i.e. have him confined. This was the customary
bound	-	treatment of madmen
carry it thus	-	maintain this pretence.
his penance	-	his mortification; or 'as a punishment for his former 'ill-treatment of us'
till our... on him	-	till becoming tired of our jest, we show him some mercy and release him from his state of apparent madness.
bring ... the bar	-	bring the trick into open court, 'the bar' being the barrier at which the prisoners stand: hence 'court' i.e. to make the whole plot public and publicly try it.
crown thee	-	confer on you the highest honour.
finder of madmen	-	discoverer of madmen. There may be pun on the word 'find' in the sense of 'bring' a verdict.
More matters.... morning	-	more spot fit for a holiday as is usual on a May day. During Shakespeare's day, the first of May was regarded as a day of festivity in honour of the new season.
There's vinegar... in't	-	It (the challenge) is full of sharp and bitter words. Vinegar being sour, stands for sourness of expression and pepper being hot to the taste, stands for sharpness.
saucy	-	(1) insolent (2) highly seasoned (this has

		reference to the vinegar and pepper in the previous line).
scurvy fellow	-	dishonourable or contemptuous fellow
nor admire not	-	do not be surprised. The word 'admire' is here used in its original Latin sense of 'to wonder at'.
A good note	-	well said
keeps you law	-	saves you from legal punishment for causing a breach of peace.
thou liest in thy throat	-	an emphatic from of 'thou liest' frequently used by Shakespeare. (Sir Andrew is following the instructions of Sir Toby. Act III sc ii: II 44)
senseless	-	it is senseless because he has just denied the only reason he could have for challenging Ceasario. Fabian utters the word 'less' in such a manner that it is not heard by Sir Andrew. Fabian's satirical remark is really a comment full of truth.
O' the windy side	-	to windward, a nautical metaphor meaning at a distance from law. which to come up to him, would have to sail against the wind.
He may have... is better	-	Sir Andrew means to say 'I hope I shall survive' but what he says amounts to 'I hope I shall be damned.
You may have... for't	-	you are likely to have a very fine opportunity of delivering the challenge.
Scout me for him	-	keep watch for him on my behalf
bum-baily	-	a bailiff; sheriff's officer for arrest etc.
draw	-	draw you sword
for it comes to pass oft	-	for it often happens
With a swaggering accent	-	expressed in a boastful manner
harply twangled off	-	smarty uttered or declared
gives manhood more approbation	-	bring greater credit and reputation to one's courage.
than ever... him	-	than could be attained by him by a trial of exhibition of his courage.
gives him out to be	-	proclaims him to be; indicate
good capacity and breeding	-	sensible and refined
so excellently ignorant	-	so hopelessly senseless
clodpole	-	blockhead; literally, having a head (pole) made of a lump of earth (cold)
(set upon)... valour	-	(bestow upon) or describe sir Andrew (to the youth) as being famous for his courage.
drive the gentleman	-	force the gentleman
into a most... impetuosity	-	form a terrible opinion of Sir Andrew's anger, skill, violence and rashness.
they will kill... look	-	i.e without the necessity of fighting with each other
like cockatrices	-	the cockatrice or basilisk, a fabulous reptile,

		hatched by a serpent from cock's egg, and so poisonous as to kill by its very look. In this comparison, the poison which will kill them both (i.e. Sir Andrew and Cesario) is the fear of one for the other.
Laid out	-	exposed, expended
too unchary	-	heedlessly or lavishly
something in me	-	an uneasy feeling in my conscience (that of having received too much forgetting my status and dignity)
headstrong potent	-	willful and powerful
That it……reproof	-	that it pays no heed to reproach of any sort
with the same……grief	-	The same torments my master experiences as are your vehement passion and grief on account of unrequited love
jewel	-	A miniature in a rich setting
It hath……..you	-	It does not have the power of speech and so you need not be afraid of being vexed by it, as you are being vexed now, by my conversation
What shall you ask...give?	-	What thing is there (that I may give upon the very asking without tainting my honour) that I shall refuse to give you?
With mine honour	-	keeping my honour, without risking my honour
that	-	my love
acquit you	-	release you from your contract i.e. refund to you, the love you have given me, so that you can give it to Orsino.
A fiend….. hell	-	I would willingly submit to my soul being carried to hell by a devil like you
thy intercepter	-	the one who is to intercept you: your adversary of foe
despite	-	Malice
blood as the hunter	-	as ferocious as either a huntsman or the hunting dog
dismount thy fuck	-	draw your sword from its sheath. 'Tuck' is from the Italian *Stacco*, a rapier
yare	-	quick and ready
auarrel to me	-	grievance against me
my remembrance…any man	-	I do not remember ever having done any wrong to anyone
if you hold…price	-	if you value your life at all.
betake you to your guard	-	be on your guard and protect yourself
unhatched	-	not hacked or broken, not marketed by use in battle on carpet consideration – i.e. as a carpet knight, "Carpet – knights were those who received knighthood in consideration of civil (not military) services to the state, merely through the personal favour of the monarch. As they knelt to receive their

		honour not on the field of battle but on carpeted floor, they were – termed *carpet knights*. Gradually "*carpet- knight* came to be a contemptuous term for an effeminate unwarlike man"
Souls and bodies... three	-	literally it means he has separated three souls from three bodies i.e. he has killed three persons.
incensement	-	Anger
Implacable	-	unappeasable
that satisfaction...sepulcher	-	that it cannot be allayed expect by death and burial.
Hob, nob	-	have not, synonymous with give it or take it.
Put quarrels.....valour	-	Deliberately quarrel with others only to put their courage to test
quirk	-	whim; peculiarity
his indignation.....injury	-	you must have caused him sufficient injury to rouse his anger
competent injury	-	an offence sufficient to justify a demand for satisfaction.
Give him his desire	-	give him satisfaction by fighting a duel with him.
unless you undertake... answer him	-	unless you fight with me instead of with him, with equal chances if danger.
therefore, on, or strip.... naked	-	either move on to meet the incensed knight, or draw your sword to fight with me
meddle	-	literally it means 'interfere'; here it means fight
forswear.... you	-	take an oath that hence forth you will never wear your sword; i.e. admit to cowardice.
courteous office	-	polite service
purpose	-	intention, willfulness
even to a mortal arbitrement	-	to such an extent as to have the matter settled by a duel to death.
but nothing of ....more	-	but nothing more do I know of the affair
nothing of ....valour	-	you will not be able to judge from the outward appearance the courage within him which he is likely to exhibit when the right occasion arises.
go with Sir Priest than Sir Knight	-	prefer the company of peaceful pious persons like priests than that of fighters such as the knights
I care not......... mettle	-	nor am I ashamed if anybody comes to know that I lack courage (mettle).
Firago	-	This is Sir Toby's adaptation of 'virago', a man-like woman.
A pass	-	an exchange of thrust in fencing
in	-	direct to the body
with..... motion	-	in such a deadly manner
pay	-	kill

Sophy	-	the Shah of Persia
can scarce hold him yonder	-	cannot be made to desist from
I'd have...him	-	I would have liked to see him damned before challenging him to a duel
I'll make the motion	-	I shall propose what you say to him i.e. of setting by means of the gift of a horse.
without the perdition of souls	-	without the death of any one of you
I'll ride your horse	-	Sir Toby hints that the horse will come to him
take up the quarrel	-	make up the dispute
is as horribly concerted	-	has as terrifying a notion
He hath better.... quarrel	-	he has thought over his grounds of offence
and he finds...Talking of	-	and does not think it worth his while questioning its soundness, or re-considering it now.
protests	-	assures, promises
give ground	-	retreat; or yield without opposing
by the duello	-	by the rules governing the conduct of a duel.
Pray god... oath	-	May god help him to keep his oath- i.e. of not hurting him (Sir Andrew)
undertaker	-	One who takes upon himself the responsibilities of another.
for that	-	for the promise than you will not hurt me which promise you have kept up....
reins well	-	can be managed by the reins easily
do the office	-	carry out your orders
at the suit of	-	at the instances of
favour	-	appearance
It grieves me....myself	-	I am only sorry that I can no longer serve you as I am arrested; as for me I do not care what may happen to me.
you stand amazed	-	Evidently Viola is at a loss to understand why the stranger should take such great interest in her.
lean and low ability	-	meager and poor means
of my present	-	my present store
half my coffer	-	half of what I have
deserts to you	-	services to you
Is it possible....persuasion	-	Can you, of all people, be unmoved when you remember what consideration I deserve?
lack persuasion	-	fail to persuade
Do not tempt my misery	-	do not provoke me in my present miserable condition.
unsound	-	exasperated; morally weak as to expect a return for service I have done to you.
any feature	-	any mark in your appearance
than	-	more than (I hate...)
babbling	-	Gossiping
whose strong..... frail blood	-	whose powerful corrupting influence infects our weak natures
snatched....death	-	rescued him when he was half dead.

relieved	Helped
sanctity of love	intense devotion (as of religious worship)
to his image	to his person
which me thought... worth	which seemed to give me promises of possessing excellent qualities as were likely to command everyone's respect
How vile....god	how wicked and worthless a status (idol) this man turns out to be whom I took for a god!
done good feature shame	By your behaviour you have brought shame to the handsome appearance you possess
In nature there is:.. mind	Blemishes (ugliness) and deformities are not to be looked for in the external physical appearance of a person
None can be... unkind	it is not the defect of one's appearance that makes him look ugly. The real deformity is hard – heartedness
beauteous evil	those who are beautiful to look at but are full of evil qualities.
trunks	chests
over – flourished	profusely decorated, carved with elaborate designs.
Methinks his words... himself	his words appear to be born of strong and genuine feeling. The man believes that he know me before and rescued me from the sea.
So do not I	But I am sure he is mistaken
Prove true imagination	May what I imagine prove to be a reality.
That I.... for you	that Antonio take me for my brother (who has perhaps been saved and is alive)
a couplet	a couple
We'll whisper...saws	Sir Toby is clearly deriding some of the couplets recently uttered
I my... yet living in my glass	I know my brother to be mirrored to the like in my person, in myself who am the glass.
even so my brother	My brother was exactly like me in appearance. He always used to dress in fashion, in such colours, and with such ornaments about him.
For him I imitate	I have dressed myself in imitation of him.
Tempests are kind	Tempests which are usually unkind are kind.
and salt ... love	and waves, which by nature are salty, are fresh (not salty)
leaving his .. necessity	betraying his friend by being ungrateful and refusing help when he is in trouble and needs help.
A most devout...in it	one who seems positively to worship cowardice as though he had made a religion of it.
'Slid	by God's eyelid; a mild oath
cuff	'to give somebody a cuff' means give a light

		blow with the fist of the open hand.
I dare..... yet	-	I dare make any wager that nothing will come out of it, i.e. each will be so afraid of the other that there will be no fighting at all

Act IV Scene 1

Summary

Feste, the clown meets Sebastian in a square before Olivia's house. He mistakes Sebastian for Viola and asks him to see Lady Olivia. Sebastian is unable to understand why Olivia should have sent the clown to call him, for he is a stranger to Illyria. Therefore he gives the clown a coin and dismisses him.

Sir Andrew enters the square with drawn sword, followed by Sir Toby and Fabian. He also mistakes Sebastian for Cesario and hits him. Sebastian returns the blows, vehemently. Now Sir Toby interferes and seizes him from behind. The clown at once goes to tell this to his lady.

Olivia comes from the house and orders Sir Toby to stop fighting. She reproaches the two knights angrily and sends them away. She is now left alone with Sebastian whom she mistakes for Cesario. She invites him to come into her house. Sebastian, too, follows her, though he finds everything strange and unbelievable.

Let fancy still my sense in Lethe sleep:
If it be thus to dream still let me sleep.

Comment

Sebastian is here presented as a man of action; like Viola he is depicted as a bounteous giver. His meek acceptance of Olivia's invitation sounds strange. But that is in tune with the topsy-turvy world of *Twelfth Night.*

Disguise, I see, thou art wickedness,
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much,

says Viola. Here indeed, the disguise of Viola has made these people mistake Sebastian for Viola. This is a merry world. The characters forget to look into reality. Even the fool mistakes Sebastian for Viola. The scene proceed from prose to poetry suggesting that Sebastian also is entering into a world of imagination and fancy and his willing acceptance of Olivia's solicitation is

dramatic.

Notes

2. Will you... For you? - Do you wish to make me believe that I am not sent for you'?

8. Nothing that is so is so - 'nothing is as it appears: everything is an illusion'. This line sums up the meaning of the play.

13-14 I am afraid cockney - Dr. Johnson explains these lines thus. 'That is, affectation and foppery will overspread the world
lubber - big clumsy fellow.
Cockney - properly a foppish fellow. According to J.C. Dent, it originally meant a cock's egg, and later applied to a 'spoilt child". Now it is used to denote the lower classes in London.

17. foolish Greek - foolish jester. This is from the proverb "As merry as a Greek". An expression often used by old dramatists

19. worse payment - by beating you.

22 after fourteen .... Purchase - The New Shakespeare Editors have interpreted that the tip must be repeated at least fourteen times to be effective. "Fourteen years' may refer to a very long time. The current price of land at this period being 12 years, purchase. "After fourteen years", means 'at a higher price'. This brings out the humorous nature of the clown.

29. straight - immediately, straightaway

29-30 I would two pence - I am not in the coats of some of you. Compare this with Malvolio's 'I am not of your element'. The clown is light heartedly sarcastic. But "Malvolio is harsh and ego-centric". For two pence - For a good deal.

32-33. an action of battery - a legal phrase, more fully 'assault and battery'. Shakespeare uses the phrase in its accurate sense.

38. Well fleshed - According to The Arden Shakespeare Editor "This is surely spoken to Sebastian, not to Sir Andrew (first suggested by C.Badham, 1856) The New Shakespeare Editors say that this is spoken to Sir Andrew. The phrase means 'you are very strong'.

43. malapert - saucy. Unlike Sir Andrew, Sir Toby is brave.

45. will it ever be thus - Can you never behave decently?

51. Rudesby - rough fellow

52. Let thy fair .... thy peace - In the matter of the violent and underserved attack against

54. your peace, please be guided by your calm wisdom and not by the anger which it may provoke.

55. Fruitless pranks – pointless and idle freaks

58. Beshrew his soul for me – I pray that evil may befall him for what he has done in startling.

59. He started, etc - There is probably a pun on heart If 'heart is taken, the meaning would be that Sir Toby has startled the heart of Olivia which is in the heart of Sebastian. If 'hart', the meaning would be that Sir Toby has startled Sebastian, who is a hart (stag) to Olivia

60. What relish.... this - How dose this taste? What am I to think of it?
how runs..............stream? - in what direction are the matters going? Whither is the stream of events carrying me?

62. Let fancy .... sleep! - Let imagination dip my sense in the river of

oblivion. If it be nice to dream like this, let me sleep still.

Lethe is one of the five rivers of the infernal world. It is the river of forgetfulness

65. O, say so, and so be! - Not only say so, but be so.

Act IV Scene 2

Summary

Sir Toby, Maria and Feste are once again preparing a practical joke on Malvolio in a room in Olivia's house. Malvolio is now locked in a dark room. Feste has dressed up as Master Parson Topas and they go to Malvolio's dark room.

Feste, changing his voice, blesses the 'Possessed' Malvolio. The latter, from within, greets Sir Topas and asks him to call Olivia. Feste replies that Malvolio must be mad for he says that his room is dark when it has bay windows.. Then the clown asks his opinion about the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration of souls. Malvolio replies promptly but the clown mistakes it willfully. After continuing to nag Malvolio in this way for some time, Feste puts off the disguise of the parson. He speaks in double voice. Poor Malvolio cannot understand the mockery of the fool. He says that he is sound in mind and asks him to give him 'some light and some paper' whereon to write a note to Olivia. Feste leaves singing a song,

Comment

This scene is a continuation of Act III, Scene 4. It portrays how Malvolio is ill-treated by his rivals when they are asked by Olivia to take care of him. This cruel treatment arouses pity in the audience. This has led some critics to think that it is highly pathetic. Malvolio does not share the joys of his rivals. This is his folly. He has paid a heavy price for this in this scene. Further Malvolio's knowledge of Pythagorean theory is revealed here. His statement "I am as well in my wits, as any man in Illyria" is a pathetic cry of a hunted individual. There is an undercurrent of comedy too in that statement. For, all the characters except a few are not in their right mind. But Malvolio, without his knowledge, identifies himself with these people who, he thinks, have wisdom. The versatility of the clown is clearly brought out here. He plays the role of Topas perfectly. His attack on the clergy is very mild. He understands Malvolio fully well. But, to play the role of Sir Topas assigned to him without giving room for suspicion, he acts as if he did not know Malvolio previously. His remark – "I am for all waters" is a very good

criticism of himself. It is not an overstatement. His song in the end of the scene suggests his inner harmony and the happy union of Sebastian and Olivia in the next scene. The reference to old Vice hints at the end of Knavery. The song also relieves us of the pent-up feelings of pity for Malvolio. He pays farewell to goodman devil. This means that disguise, gulling, revenge etc. associated with the devil are going to end and the wedding is going to take place. This is supported by the appearance of a real priest in the next scene

This scene in prose expresses the comic spirit of the play. From the imaginative poetic situation of the previous scene we are brought to the real and prosaic world of the clown and Malvolio.

Notes

Sir Topas	-	Shakespeare may of course have borrowed this name from Chaucer's *Rime of Sir Thopas*. But according to Furness, he owed it to Scot's *Discovere of Witchcraft* 'Sir' was used to designate a Bachelor of arts and is commonly found as a title for clergymen at this period.
tall enough	-	'Tall' is probably used here in the sense of 'robust' 'stout'
Good housekeeper	-	A hospitable man
goes as fairly	-	It is just as honorable to be called ("said") an honest man as it is to be called a scholar.
careful	-	full of the proper scholar's cares and wants
competitors	-	the confederates
Bonos dies	-	good day. In his character as clergyman, the clown attempts to talk in Latin.
or as the old hermit.... Gorboduc	-	Gorboduc - The Clown exhibits mock authority. King Gorboduc is mentioned in the legendary British history, and appears in chronicles and in Norton and Sackville's tragedy *Gorboduc* (1562). The 'hermit' and 'niece' are fictitious.
That that is, is	-	Whatever is is; and it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be; Feste speaks as if he was a man of wide learning and authority.
peace in this prison house	-	the salutation of a clergyman on entering a house
counterfeits	-	imitates
hyperbolical	-	literally 'exaggerated', here used to mean 'vehement'
fiend	-	Satan
hideous	-	filling the mind with horror; frightful

most modest terms	-	most moderate, not half as harsh as I might use.
house is dark	-	A 'dark house' was the technical term for a place of confinement for madmen. It was a custom in those days to imprison madmen in a dark room
bay windows	-	windows with a bay, recess; what we now call "Low windows"
clerestories	-	A term in Gothic architecture for an upper storey or row, of windows in a church, hall, etc. But actually there was little light because Malvolio could not see Feste.
eboney	-	(hard) black wood.
Puzzled than, in their fog	-	This is a reference to the ninth plaguê sent by God upon the Egyptians for refusing to let the Israelites depart out of their land. Exodus: X, 21-22 "And the Lord said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt, And Moses stretched forth his hand toward, heaven; and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days
abused	-	ill-treated
make the trial constant question-		test it by any logical question requiring a logical answer
opinion of Pythagorus	-	This is an allusion to the belief in the transmigration of souls held by Pythagorus
wild foul	-	not significantly associated with the Pythagorean doctrine but introduced here in order to give rise to the 'wood cock' jest (TN.II..IV, 84)
wood cock	-	The clown mentions a wood cock particularly, because that bird was supposed to have very little brains, and therefore was a proper ancestor for a man out of his right mind.
I am for all waters	-	I am ready for anything. The origin of the phrase has not been traced
I would be.....this knavery	-	I should be glad if we could put an end to this plot of ours.
If he may be conveniently ...upshot	-	If we could manage to set him free in some way, that would I Prevent further trouble. I should be glad of it; for I am at present not in good terms with my niece and she may turn me out of her house.
Perdy	-	By God; Feste goes on singing and pretends, that he does not hear Malvolio's voice

How fell... five wit	-	What had made you lose your five sense? The five wits are the mental powers such as common wit, imagination, fantasy. estimation and memory
propertied me	-	treated me like a sensualists object
to face me out of my wits	-	cheat me out of my senses by sheer impudence
Bibble babble	-	Your idle meaningless talk Tithe - tattle, pribble – prabble, prattle - prattle, etc. convey the same meaning,
God buy you	-	God be with you, i.e., good-bye
shent	-	rebukes
Well -a-day. Sir!	-	alas, I only wish; you were 'well-a-day' is a corruption of 'well-away'
The old vice	-	i.e. the Fool of the old interludes, clad (like Feste) in the long coat of the domestic fool. He also generally carried like the fool a sword or dagger of lath, and Feste's reference to this suggests that he too wore such a dagger and made play with it as he sang this song. The old Vice, a character in the Morality play put the Devil into suffering with his sham sword and often attempted to cut his nail. It is clear that in Feste's little interlude Malvolio, the possessed, plays the devil. It is however, incorrect to suppose that Vice always carried a wooden dagger.
goodman	-	used in a contemptuous sense
Adieu	-	The farewell is either part of the Vice's speech to the Devil in the rhyme or addressed by the Clown to Malvolio by way of exit.

Act IV — Scene 3

Summary

Sebastian. Viola's brother, is in the garden of Olivia. He finds himself enveloped in happy confusion. He knows well that it is not madness. He thinks of Antonio and wants to get his good counsel. But he wonders why Antonio was not to be found at the Elephant Inn in the South suburbs.

Olivia then comes forth with a priest and asks Sebastian to come with her to the chapel. She asks him to give his consent to the marriage before the priest. Sebastian follows the holy priest accompanied by Olivia.

Comment

This is a short scene when compared with the previous scene. The plot gradually evolves in this scene. Sebastian's meek acceptance of marriage

with Olivia slowly builds up the resolution which is reached in the last scene of the play.

Sebastian's soliloquy is the sequel to what we have seen at the end of Act IV, Scene I. The imagery of the "glorious sun" "this accident and flood of fortune" goes with the wonder and delight of Act IV. Scene I. Sebastian's tribute to Olivia's "smooth, discreet, and stable bearing" colours her speech. Her religious sincerity is revealed in making Sebastian give, "assurance of your faith" and "heavens so shine" give an aura of spirituality to her love for Sebastian.

Notes

This is the air.... and see't	-	I am able to feel and see things as they really are and I am under no hallucination. 'This', 'that', and 'This pearl' heighten the dramatic intensity. Olivia has presented a pearl to Sebastian; pearl is suggestive of magnificence and royalty.
And though not madness	-	And though I am enraptured with wonder, I am not enveloped with lunacy. I am sound, in mind.
credit	-	report, belief
There he was	-	he had been there lately and he was not there when I went to look for him.
For though....Lady's mad	-	For though my in most feelings and reason conclude, in agreement with my senses, that this is no delusion of insanity, but a real experience; though occasioned by some error, yet this good fortune which has befallen me is so abundant. So beyond all precedent and explanation that I am ready to distrust my eyes (i.e. my senses), and argue against my very reason that the only trustworthy solution is either I am mad or the lady is so.
sway her house	-	rule her house
Take and give their dispatch	-	assume and discharge the management of affairs
discreet	-	clear-sighted
stable bearing	-	royal demeanour
Blame not this haste of mine	-	please do not blame me for my hasty arrangements
chantry	-	part of a church, or a chapel attached to a great house or standing alone. Priests are appointed to offer daily mass for the souls of the founders or for others.

underneath that consecrated roof	-	under the holy roof of the chantry
plight me... your faith	-	reassure me of your complete good faith by a solemn betrothal
jealous	-	anxious
conceal	-	keep it secret
whiles	-	until
what time	-	at which time
according to my birth	-	In a way suitable to my status
worn truth	-	taken an oath of truth
fairly note	-	let heavens look favorably. Olivia, perhaps, may be troubled at heart about her vow to mourn the death of her brother for seven years; but more probably these lines stress that her betrothal to Sebastian, though rooted on mistaken identify, is not ridiculous but indeed fitting and admirable.

Act V — Scene 1

Summary

Feste and Fabian are in a square before Olivia's house. Fabian wants to read the letter of Malvolio, but Feste does not like to show it to him. Duke Orsino enters with Viola (Cesario) and attendants and asks Fabian and Feste whether they are of Countess Olivia's household. Orsino recognizes Feste and the latter jokes with the Duke, earning handsome rewards for his efforts.

Cesario calls Orsino's attention to Antonio, whom he sees approaching with officers, and tells Orsino that he is the man who rescued him from the hands of Sir Andrew. At once, the Duke recognizes Antonio as the captain of an insignificant vessel. The first officer also corroborates it and says that it is Antonio who captured the ship Phoenix and boarded the Tiger in a fight in which Orsino's nephew lost a leg. As the officer had seen Antonio in a street fight, he had arrested him. But Cesario says that Antonio had bravely rescued him from Sir Andrew, though he spoke strangely afterwards. Orsino cannot imagine why Antonio should have come to Illyria, knowing the impending danger.

Antonio protests that he has never been a thief or a pirate, although he confesses his enmity to the Duke. He came to the town because of his friendly love for Sebastian. (At this moment, Antonio has mistaken Viola for Sebastian). He says further that he saved the boy from drowning after the

shipwreck and came to Illyria. He drew his sword in defence of his friend. But the ungrateful Sebastian has refused even to return his purse.

Orsino asks Antonio when his young friend came to Illyria. Antonio replies promptly that it was only half an hour before the street fight. The Duke realizes this to be absolutely impossible for Cesario has served him as a page for three months.

Then Olivia from her house with attendants. On seeing her, Orsino puts the case of Antonia aside. Olivia mistakes Cesario for Sebastian and asks Cesario why he has not kept his promise with her Cesario says that his master would talk to her. But the Countess is ready to hear Orsino so long as it is not on the old theme of love for her. He understands that the Countess has fallen in love with Cesario. Out of his savage jealousy he feels miserable and says that he must kill Cesario in order to comfort his broken heart. The Duke turns to go after the lady has rejected him outright. Cesario follows him telling that he will accept 'a thousand deaths' for the sake of his master.

The countess, not realizing that it was with Sebastian and not with Cesario that she appeared before the priest in the Chantry, reproaches Cesario for his faithlessness and asks whether he has forgotten the oath taken before the holy priest. Having been sent for by Olivia, the priest just then enters and asserts that Cesario and the Countess had sworn the holy vows of matrimony only two hours before. The Duke is rather amazed to hear this and he charges Cesario with deception, because he has secretly won the hands of Olivia in marriage while apparently professing to be pressing his master's love-suit. He permits Cesario to take Olivia as his wife but he should never meet the Duke thereafter.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek comes there with his head broken. He says that Sir Toby too has been attacked by Cesario and he is in need of a surgeon. It is clear that Sir Andrew has mistaken Sebastian for Cesario. Seeing Cesario standing by the side of the Duke, Andrew once again confirms that it is Cesario who hurt him. But poor Cesario pleads innocence.

Then Sir Toby arrives. He is drunk. Olivia orders Sir Andrew and others to take him away, so that his wound may be dressed up.

Just then Sebastian himself appears on the scene and there comes an end tc

all these problems. He apologizes to Olivia for hurting Sir Toby. The Duke is the first to observe the likeness in appearance, in voice and behaviour between Sebastian and Cesario. He calls it a "natural perspective". Sebastian greets Antonio and the latter asks which of the two people really is Sebastian.

Sebastian says that he has no brother, but he had a sister who was drowned in a shipwreck. Cesario replies that 'he' is a native of Messalina; Sebastian was 'his' father and 'he' had a brother named also Sebastian; this brother, however, had been drowned in a wreck,

Sebastian replies that if Cesario were a woman he would greet her as his sister Viola. Then Viola reveals her identity. She admits that after being rescued by a sea-captain from the shipwreck, she had disguised herself as a man and entered the service of Duke Orsino.

The Duke is very anxious to see Viola in her maiden dress. But, unfortunately, Viola's clothes are with the sea captain who is now in prison on the orders of Malvolio.

Olivia orders Malvolio to be brought to her, but she remembers that she is "much distract" Then the Clown enters with Malvolio's letter in which he has written that the Countess had ill-treated him and put him in a dark room. He added that he did everything as he was directed to do in her letter. Olivia orders at once that Malvolio be released.

Olivia addresses the Duke to take her as a sister and invites him to come to her house to celebrate her marriage with Sebastian. The Duke promises Viola that he will marry her and make her, her "master's mistress".

Malvolio then appears. He protests against the wrong done to him by Olivia. He shows the letter in which she had asked him to wear yellow stockings, dress himself cross-gartered and to smile all the time, Olivia says that the letter might have been written by Maria. Nevertheless, justice will be done to him for what has happened. All except the Clown go within. He ends the play with the song "Hey, ho, the wind and the rain".

Comment

This is the longest scene in the play with prose and poetry intermingled. All the thorny problems of the previous scenes are resolved here. Though there is no actual celebration of marriage, we are informed that 'a solemn combination of dear souls' will definitely come to pass.

Once more — for the fourth time in the play — Feste opens the scene. Here, Shakespeare's problem is how to unravel the complications of the plot most effectively. A study of the entries in sequence will definitely show how artistically he devised to get all the major characters on the stage-save Malvolio — before the entry of Sebastian. Malvolio is the last to enter and the first to depart, thus stressing his aloofness from the happiness of others. He belongs neither to the world of romance nor to that of foolery. He is an ego-centric man building his own castles in the air and often boosting his own image. He is perfect and happy within his castles. Outside these bounds, he finds things topsy turvy. He cannot stomach them. Hence he suffers a lot.

Twelfth Night is a comedy of love on more than one level. Antonio's love for Sebastian can be termed spiritual, Viola's love for the Duke is genuine and deep-rooted, whereas the Duke's love for Viola is too sudden. His conviction,

For boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering sooner lost and worn.
Than women's are ....

echoes his heart. His sudden change of love from Olivia to Viola can be explained only in this way. When he is tossed away by the winds of passion; he asserts his love; and when cooled, he is ready to change. Olivia's love is truly romantic and strong. She is ready to reap the harvests of love by all means. But is it easy to change love for Cesario to Sebastian? Sir Toby's love for Maria is rooted in experience. They love each other from the beginning. They are a happy - go lucky lot - Though their marriage is too sudden, it is not unexpected.

The introduction of Antonio is timely. To a greater extent, he helps to unravel the complications of the plot. His account of the shipwreck is informative to the Duke and Viola.

The introduction of Sir Andrew with his head broken and Sir Toby bleeding throws light on the previous brooding of Sir Andrew's vengeance on Cesario. It is, however, tragic and not in tune with this scene. But it is not totally out of context. For it leads to the introduction of Sebastian who is going to set right all the complications.

The scene is written with a vein of wonder and amusement. The gradual unfolding of truth leads to the final solemnization of marriage.

The play ends with a song. The song by Feste is comical. Its theme is

the pilgrimage of humanity from the cradle to the grave. Man lives in a hostile universe. Man has to adjust a lot to lead a happy life

Notes

His letter	-	Malvolio's letter
This is to give a dog etc	-	This is a topical allusion. One Dr.Bulletin had a pretty dog. The Queen asked the Doctor to give the dog to her. She promised that he would have whatsoever he would ask. She demanded his dog. He gave it and said, "Now Madame, you promised to give me my desire". "I will" said the Queen' "then I pray, you give me my dog again". Implored the Doctor. The idea of giving Malvolio's letter to Fabian and then asking him not to read it, is similar to the Doctor's resolve to give the dog to the Queen and get it back.
Though it please you etc	-	Though you are pleased to flatter me
Gold	-	Gold coins; symbol of royalty
double-dealing	-	magnificence, a) duplicity b)giving twice over
put your grace in your pocket etc	-	a triple quibble: a) your grace i.e., he is speaking to the duke; b) 'your virtue'. i.e., yield for this once to temptation: c) your generous impulse; i.e, let your generosity carry your hand to your pocket. To put a thing in one's pocket's is to overlook it deliberately
at this throw	-	a) at this throw of the dice-implying. Feste is a cheat; b) at this time
bounty	-	generosity
nap	-	short sleep
anon	-	at once
As black as Vulcan etc	-	As black with the smoke of gun powder as the face of Vulcan was with the smoke of his forge. Vulcan is the smith of the gods in classical mythology.
A baubling vessel	-	contemptibly small, like a bauble of trifling plaything.
Or shallow draught and bulk	-	i.e., virtually worthless on account of its small
unprizable		size.
Scathful	-	harmful
bottom	-	vessel
that very envy..... honour	-	that even those who hated Antonio for the injury they suffered at his hands were loudly praising his exploits.
That took the Phoenix....Candy	-	topical allusions. A great English society, the Levant company traded with the Levant Greece and the Greek islands, e.g. "candy" (crete), and Asia Minor. Its headquarters in the east was Aleppo and the "Phoenix" and

	the "tigers" were famous London ships engaged in its trade.
fraught from Candy -	Cargo from Candia(Crete)
when your young lost his leg -	This is a piece of corroborative detail to Antonio's Prowess in war (This also suggests that Orsino is older than Viola).
desperate of shame and state -	i.e. with no regard for personal shame (for his crime) or for civil discipline.
brabble -	squabble, quarrel
apprehend -	capture.
I know not.... but distraction -	i.e. I cannot explain it unless some madness seized him.
Notable pirate thief -	notorious pirate, sea-robber.
so dear -	so grievous
their mercies -	the mercies of those who....
hake off -	repudiate
on base and ground enough -	with good cause and reason.
witchcraft -	enchantment: fascination exercised upon me by this youth.
A wreck past hope he was -	but for me he would have had no hope of escape
retention -	(without) reserving or keeping to myself and of it.
Into the danger of -	the word 'danger' here retains the order of "power to harm" as well as carrying the modern sense of "risk of harm".
this adverse town -	hostile town Illyria.
Where being apprehend -	and I being seized there.
Not meaning to partake with me in danger -	he not having any intention of sharing danger with me.
face me out of his acquaintance -	deny that he knew me
And grew .... would wink -	And he became in one moment a thing removed the space of 20 years, i.e. became as one who had not seen me for twenty years.
Which I had hour before -	I have entrusted my purpose to him out of kindness not an hour before, with the desire that he should spend the money.
three months -	Viola and Sebastian have suffered the same shipwreck, and when they arrive in Illyria, it is evident that only a few days have elapsed since their escape; it is evident only to the careful reader; the spectator would notice nothing wrong The 'three moths" are probably specified in order (i) to give Antonio's regard for Sebastian a substantial ground and (ii) to emphasize that the brother and sister arrived at Illyria at the same time
No interim.. .vacancy -	without any interval even for a minute

but for thee	-	but as to you
Three months hath tended	-	This is a contradiction of valentine's speech on the second day of the action (1,43); where he says that Orsino 'hall known you (Viola) but three days". The audience would not perceive the contradiction. Shakespeare wishes to remind us that Viola's service with the Duke and Sebastian's friendship with Antonio were of the same duration, and "three months" was as good a period as any other for the purpose.
But more of that anon	-	but of that I shall have to say more immediately
What would my lord ... serviceable	-	there is no way, except in the matter of my love, in which I not gladly oblige you.
seem serviceable	-	show myself serviceable
my duty hushes me	-	respect for my lord prevents my speaking while he wishes to do so
old tune	-	The old theme of love
fat and fulsome	-	gross and distasteful
to perverseness	-	do you mean you are constant to perverseness? For, you cannot say 'constant' in any other meaning of the term.
uncivil	-	harsh-spoken: discourteous
ingrate and unauspicious	-	ungrateful and unpropitious
To whose.. tendered	-	before whose shrine ungrateful and unpropitious as you are, I have breathed forth the truest vows of love that were ever offered by the most devoted lover,
Even what... become him	-	Whatever your pleasure may be provided it is an action that is not unworthy of you
Like to the Egyptian	-	Thyamis, a bandit chief, beset by his enemies and despairing of life, intends to kill Chariclea whom he loves, though in the darkness of his cave he says another by mistakes. This story is found in *Ethiopica* of Heliodorus
a savage. ..nobly	-	An act of brutal jealousy which in circumstances has a taste at nobility
non-regardance	-	neglect
screws	-	wrenches
minion	-	darling; used here in a contemptuous sense
I'll sacrifice .... dove	-	I am ready to offer the lamb I love as a sacrifice. (Sacrifice here carries a sense of destruction) Viola has the appearance of a gentle dove but has a heart as black a that of a raven
apt	-	Aptly

To do you rest	-	give you peace
If you do feign...my love	-	If I speak falsely, may the heavens punish me for being disloyal to the love I feel
detested	-	hated
Ay husband	-	Olivia uses the word 'husband' with reference either to an accomplished marriage or an agreed one
Sirrah	-	term of contempt
strangle thy property	-	deny your identity and nature
Be that thou know'st...fearest	-	Show yourself as my husband and then you will be the equal of that man of whom you are afraid (the Duke)
unfold	-	reveal
darkness	-	secret
occasion	-	what has befallen; present circumstances
A contract...love	-	an interchange of pledges of eternal love
joinder	-	union
attested	-	proved
holy close of tips	-	the solemn exchange of kisses. Kiss is a symbol of intimate communication of two hearts. The speech has an aura of spirituality.
sealed...testimony	-	Confirmed or ratified through my performance oı priestly office and by my formal attestation.
I have...hours	-	before two hours
cub	-	fox-cub, the fox being proverbial for cunning.
when time..the case	-	When you are no longer a cub, but a full-grown animal as shown by your grey hairs, i.e. when you are a grown man.
trip...overthrow	-	A metaphor from wrestling with a quibble on 'trap'.
Or will not...overthrow	-	You will be a monster of deceit by the time you come to your full growth, but perhaps you will never live to reach that full growth, for your precocious attempt to trip up others may result in your own fall.
Hold little faith	-	keep at least a little faith
though thou hast...fear	-	You are so full of fear
H'as	-	he has
Od's lifelings	-	by God's life. The diminutive plural reduces the full force of the oath.
But I bespake you fair	-	I gave a fair reply for your threats
incardinate	-	incarnate
coxcomb	-	head, used in a ludicrous sense
set nothing by	-	i.e. think nothing of
halting	-	walking lame

agone	-	ago
sot	-	blockhead
His eyes...morning	-	gone out like stars in the morning.
passy-measures pavin	-	The pavin was a slow, stately dance, a variety of it being passy-measures. The 'strains' of this dance consist of eight bars each, and Sir Toby in his half-sober condition associates Feste's remark about the surgeon's eyes with the dance: both were set at eight. The doctor is slow in coming to heal the wounds of Sir Toby, and the pavin was also a slow dance; the kind of dance Sir Toby detested; what he liked, were lively dances such as the Galliard and the Coranto (Act I. Scene 3, 122-142). "It is one of Shakespeare's unrivalled excellences that his characters are always consistent. Even in drunkenness they (here Sir Toby) preserve the traits which distinguished them when sober", says Malone.
dressed	-	wounds dressed
gull	-	cheat
be looked to	-	attended to by the doctor.
brother of my blood	-	my own brother; a kinsman of my own, and the closest. This is ingeniously introduced by Shakespeare just before Sebastian is to see Viola.
With wit and safety	-	i.e. with a sensible regard, for my safety.
so late ago	-	so short a time ago
habit	-	dress
A natural perspective	-	i.e. the sister and brother, exactly alike in features and dress, are like the pictures in a stereoscope, a glass that produces an optical delusion of two persons instead of one.
Fearest thou	-	do you doubt?
An apple....creature	-	you two are more similar in appearance (voice and dress) has an apple seemingly parted but yet joined together. In Shakespeare's *A Mid summer Night's Dream* this image occurs again: "So we grew together, like to a double cherry, seemingly parted, But yet an union partition"
Nor can there....everywhere	-	Sebastian refers to the divine attribution of "ubiquity"
Blind	-	ignorant (pathetic fallacy)
such a Sebastian	-	as you look
suited	-	dressed
Watery tomb	-	sea – grave
If sprits... fright us	-	if sprits have the charm to assume both

the form and dress of a man, then I should say you have come as a spirit to terrify us. Hence 'sprit' means ghost.

But am... participate	-	but have as solid a body as my soul has been partner with since my birth.
as the rest goes even	-	as every other particular corresponds
mole	-	black dot
And died... years	-	My father Sebastian died on Viola's thirteenth birthday.
that record... my soul	-	the recollection of that dwells very vividly in my mind still.
maiden weeds	-	dress of a girl
preserved to serve	-	i.e. helped into the service of
All the occurrence of	-	everything that has happened to
bias drew	-	the metaphor is from the game bowls. The bias was properly the load inserted to give the ball an inclined movement; then it came to mean the direction in which it moved. "Nature followed its in born tendency to mate female with male, and so undo the effects of Viola's misleading disguise".
maid and man	-	'virgin youth'
right noble in his blood	-	he is of royal blood
the glass seems true	-	since what seemed to be the delusions of a perspective glass is still turning out be real.
wrack	-	wreck
like to me	-	'That orbed continent may be either the sun itself or the sphere in which the sun was believed to be fixed.
Malvolio's suit	-	we have heard nothing before of this law-suit; it is Shakespeare's device for bringing back Malvolio upon the scene. It also suggests that Malvolio is a troublesome person.
enlarge	-	set free
much distract	-	much out of his mind
extracting	-	This has not been satisfactorily explained hitherto. It means 'extracting the quintessence'.
Belzebub	-	the prince of devils
at the stave's end	-	i.e at a distance.
epistles	-	There is a word play on 'epistle' as (i) any letters; (ii) apostolic letters in the *New Testament*; on 'gospels' as (i) the four Gospels in the *New Testament.* (ii) Statements to be implicitly received as true; and on 'delivered' as (i) taken to the persons to whom they are directed; (ii) read aloud in public.

It skills not much	-	It matters little
Edified	-	i.e.instructed
you must allow Vox	-	The Clown reads the letter in an extravagant manner and tells Olivia who checks him for it that voice and tone must be granted him if she would have it read in a proper manner.
read I' thy right wits	-	read what is there written properly
but to read....thus	-	but if I am to read what he really says, I must read it in this way.
prepared	-	consider
Give ear	-	please listen to
semblance	-	appearance
I have my duty....injury	-	I omit somewhat the respect for you which would normally keep me silent and speak out of my feeling of the wrong you have done me.
This savours...distraction	-	It has little sign of madness
To think me...wife	-	to approve me for a sister (in-law) as much as you would have approved me for a wife. Olivia indirectly alludes to her marriage with Sebastian and recommends Orsino's marriage with Viola.
the alliance on't	-	the relationship (between you and me) effected by it (the double marriage ceremony).
proper cost	-	own expense
quits you	-	releases you from his service
mettle	-	disposition
soft and tender breeding	-	delicate bringing up (as a noble lady)
write from it	-	i.e., write differently from it
in hand or phrase	-	either in regard to handwriting or expression
invention	-	style
grant it	-	admit that it is yours in all respects.
in the modesty of honour	-	in the name of decency and propriety
clear lights	-	evident signs
geck and gull	-	Fool
That even played on	-	That ever inventive faculty played upon
be content	-	be satisfied
This practice....thee	-	This contrivance has been played upon you in a most villainous manner
plaintiff	-	person who brings an action at law
taint	-	infect
upon some....in him	-	in consequence of some harshness and discourtesy which we considered him to have shown towards us
he hath married her	-	This is an oft-criticized passage. Some critics think that the marriage of Sir Toby with Maria is too sudden and

		improbable but this is not true. For the Clown knows that it is coming (Act I, Scene 5, 27 – 28); Sir Toby hints at it as a reward for the device of the letter (Act 2, Scene 5, 185 – 194), and his confidential speech to Maria at 4.2 68 – 73 suggests that she may have accepted the marriage proposal of Sir Toby. Secret marriages were common in Shakespeare's days.
May rather...sides passed	-	The merry spite with which the trick was followed up, is more likely, to provoke laughter than a desire for vengeance.
poor fool	-	Said without scorn; an expression partly of endearment.
some are born...them	-	Feste quotes from the forged letter written by Maria.
interlude	-	farcical play
By the Lord...gagged	-	Malvolio's bitter words in Act I, Scene 5, 81 – 87
Whirligig of time	-	Time's spinning – top. The comparison is very apt and effective.
Whirligig of time brings	-	Time as it revolves brings in its revenges;
in his revenges		the time comes when one gets one's revenge, one has only to "stand and wait"
golden time convents	-	happy moment serves
A solemn...dear souls	-	our dear souls be knit together by the solemn ceremony of marriage
Fancy's Queen	-	Queen of love
A foolish...toy	-	i.e., my playful, mischievous pranks were not taken seriously
estate	-	position
But when...gate	-	i.e., but when I grew up I found men's doors shut against me as a knave and a thief.
swaggering	-	bullying and blustering
But when I came unto my beds etc;	-	Because of the "exceeding clumsiness" Wilson considers this stanza to be un-Shakespearean.
came unto my beds	-	grew old

2.9 As a Romantic Comedy

Shakespeare has written seventeen comedies in all and each one in a unique creation. The comedies bear the mark of his genius. Hence the term 'Shakespearean comedy' implies the view that some kind of structure is common to all comedies written by him. Shakespeare's comedies can be divided into four

categories as (i) romantic comedies (ii) realistic or farcical comedies (iii) tragic-comedies, and (iv) serious to dark comedies. To the first group belong *Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*; to the second, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Taming of the Shrew*; to the third *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, and to the fourth *All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida.* It is clear that the majority of the comedies are romantic comedies. Of them, *Twelfth Night* is the most mature play and Shakespeare's greatest triumph; for it marks the consummation of that art of comedy which gratifies both the romantic and the comic instinct of the audience.

There are a few marked features which are characteristic of Shakespeare's romantic comedies:

1. A Shakespearean romantic comedy is at once romantic and comic.
2. They are pre-eminently comedies of love and throughout the play "Love's the mighty lord".
3. Love leading to marriage involves a beautiful idealized heroine, (sometimes disguised as a man, which in turn leads to mistake of identity) who is far superior to the hero.
4. Their course of love never runs smooth, but all obstacles are soon overcome chiefly by the resourcefulness of the heroine.
5. A romantic universe far from the normal world of complexities is the usual setting to suit a romantic love. Yet it is by one means unsubstantial or fantastic though they may bear remote names. They are typical English scenes where the characters are quite at home.
6. Hence there is always a happy blending of realism and fantasy.
7. Music and songs irradiate these plays enhancing and heightening the romantic atmosphere of the comedy.
8. The secondary or the sub-plot of these comedies (which usually satisfies the craze for amusement) marches side by side with the main plot and is closely woven into it.
9. The characters and the action of the sub-plot are extraordinarily funny giving ample scope for merriment and laughter.

I Check Your Progress Questions

4. How many comedies Shakespeare has written?
5. What are the four categories of Shakespeare's comedies?
6. ____ is the most mature play of Shakespeare
7. What are the categories of a Shakespearean comedy?

10. The role of the clown or the fool in Shakespeare's romantic comedies is quite significant as he is privileged to criticize the behaviour of his social superiors and his activities invariably constitute a commentary on the main action.

11. The intellectual repartee of the main characters and the ready wit of the jester provide much scope for delightful enjoyment beside the general mood of revelry in these romantic comedies.

A few other ingredients of a Shakespearean romantic comedy are adventure, disguise, confusion arising out of mistaken identity etc. In conclusion, Shakespeare's romantic comedies reveal the genial, humane attitude of the dramatist towards men and life. The medium of expression of the comic vision shows that his romantic comedies are imaginative and poetic and not satirical or critical.

Twelfth Night, which is the last of the comedies before Shakespeare entered on the period of his great tragedies, contains all these characteristic features of a romantic comedy and hence it has been praised as the greatest – or at any rate, as one of the most delightful – of Shakespeare's romantic comedies full of sweetness and pleasantry.

The atmosphere:

(i) The remoteness of the setting:

The atmosphere of *Twelfth Night* is romantic. The setting is Illyria and the sea-coast near it. Thus in our imagination we are transported to a remote place "where anything can happen"; it is an imaginary place far away from the dull and mundane world. This remoteness of the setting enhances the romantic atmosphere. The characters live in a world of make-believe not troubled by the accepted standards and conventions of ordinary life. They do not work to earn their bread. Life is one long spring to them. All kinds of merry-making, feasting, dancing and singing are heartily indulged in. In such a strange and romantic world it is not surprising to find a young woman disguised as a page-boy wooing a countess on behalf of her master. We should not ask whether she would not betray herself in her disguise. We should not also question whether brother and sister could resemble each other so much that their identities were not discovered till the very end even by Orsino and Olivia, a lady in love. In this strange world it is not unnatural to

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8 Who comment on the main action?

find a duke languishing in love for a haughty and indifferent lady. We have no reason to be surprised when we find him transferring his love from one lady to another in a trice.

(ii) **Love at first sight**:

The romance effect is heightened by love at first sight. Viola falls in love with Orsino at first sight and Olivia falls in love with Ceasario at first sight. All these strange happenings are quite probable in the world of a romantic comedy.

(iii) **Song and Music**:

And to make us suspend our disbelief in such improbable things Shakespeare employs his skill as an excellent poet and also makes use of beautiful songs to promote the romantic atmosphere of the play and lull our common sense to sleep. *Twelfth Night* is one of the most musical of the comedies of Shakespeare.

Wit and humour:

Wit and humour are the two important features of a romantic comedy. Shakespeare's comedies are full of innocent fun and laughter. A classical comedy aims at ridiculing and exposing the common human follies and vices with a view to correcting them. Shakespeare's comedies have no such aim. Their aim is merely to provide innocent, good natured and amusement. As Hazlitt remarks, they make us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them and still less bear any ill-will towards them. The laughter is kindly and genial. In order to provide for wit and humour, Shakespeare not only introduces fools and clowns who are essential parts of a Shakespearean comedy but also invents comic situations and contrives opportunities for his characters to show themselves in a comic light. The story of the shipwreck which separated Viola from her brother, and of the unusual incidents which happened before they were re-united with each other was bound to appeal to Shakespeare as offering scope for humorous situations and dramatic irony. He had, however, the insight to realize that the story was insufficient by itself to yield a full-scale play. So he dexterously combined with the episode of the hood-winking of Malvolio and the frolics in the servant's hall along with that.

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9. What are the two important features of a romantic comedy?

Union of Romance with Comic Humour:

In *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare has achieved 'an excellent union of Romance with Comic Humour' by means of a unique parallelism. "The foolish pursuit of Olivia by Orsino is reflected in the equally foolish pursuit of his mistress by Malvolio and Sir Andrew. Though for different reasons all these three characters of the under plot pursue a vain shadow like the duke of the main plot. Olivia's pursuit of Cesario is as ridiculous as Malvolio's pursuit of her. The under plot is a sort of parody of the main plot and such balance and symmetry heighten the effect to the play. The spirit of comedy is beautifully blended with the spirit of romance."

Treatment of Love

Elizabethan comedies were mostly romantic comedies. They were comedies of love. The chief occupation of the main characters seems to be wooing and Shakespeare's characters are no exception to this dramatic convention. But whereas in the earlier comedies he tried to make romance comic, in the later comedies he made comedy romantic. In *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare handles the theme of love so skillfully that it almost looks like a dissertation on Love.

Love is a fundamental chord of *Twelfth Night*. It is the note struck in the very first line of the play: "if music be the food of love, play on". The various aspects of, and attitudes to love are dealt with in a detailed manner in the play. All the important characters in the play are "lovers" except the clown and even he has some kind of an admirer. Even the lower characters in the play are love-stick, poor fancy's followers.

Of the many types of love in the play, the first we come across, is that of Orsino. It is a kind of "exaggerated love" which is unsteady and slippery. It is bred more in the head than in the heart. He toys with the idea of love and makes a show of it, in all places and at all times. It is a kind of high fantastical love, sentimental and rich. In short, Orsino is in love, with love itself. Yet there is depth in his sentiments for he calls his love "the insatiable sea". His love is tender and melancholic but it is unsteady and Olivia herself calls his love 'heresy'.

If Orsino is a hyperbolic lover, Lady Olivia is impetuous in her love. She passes very easily from melancholy to love and wants to marry Cesario at

all costs. Dignity of rank and reserve of womanhood are all flung aside. Her love is an ardent frame that consumes her whole being. When she encounters Sebastian, whom she mistakes for Cesario, she drags him to the church and rushes into matrimony with him. Her love is a kind of frenzied force that passes from melancholy and resignation to intense passion.

As a contrast to the shallow sentimental love of Orsino and the flickering passionate love of Olivia, we have the profound and patient love of Viola. In fact, in the whole play she is the only character capable of noble and beautiful love. Her love is strong, powerful and enduring. It is different from the impulsive feeling of Olivia and the theatrical sentiment of Orsino. Deep and silent as her love is, it rises as a devotion to the lover. The melancholy associated with love is gently transmuted into pathos and tenderness. Some critics say that the very quintessence of love is realized in the portrayal of Viola. Her love blooms to perfection like a rose in the warmth of Orsino's affection.

Apart from these serious types of love, we have other kinds of love too in the play. Malvolio's love is a selfish love, for he is in love with himself. It is a kind of an imaginative love. It is Malvolio's strong belief that all those who look on him are in love with him. This makes him highly credulous and ridiculous.

Sir Andrew's love for Olivia can be called a forced love. It is not spontaneous. It is brought about by the constant persuasion of Sir Toby. Like Malvolio, Sir Andrew too became ridiculous, for he loves beyond his capacity, Sir Toby too is in love. He loves Maria and it is a kind of sadden love. It is the result of their mutual liking for fun and frolic. It is realistic in a way, because it is based on enduring qualities.

To Shakespeare, Love is interesting because it is a powerful force and because it has great dramatic possibilities. Schelegal remarks that Shakespeare treats love more as an affair of the imagination rather than of the heart. Shakespeare recognizes both the love that rises from the head and the love that blooms in the heart. The former kind is a glorious illusion which makes people behave in a fantastic manner, but the latter kind is deep and lasting. It looks as in *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare has touched the pinnacles of romantic love.

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10. A classical comedy aims at ridiculing and exposing _____

Shakespeare's use of song

The quintessence of the romantic comedy is love – love in its different shades. *Twelfth Night* is essentially a love-comedy. And since music is the food of love, the whole play reverberates with music.

Twelfth Night is one of the most musical of Shakespeare's comedies, it begins and ends with music. Bradley observes: "To think of *Twelfth Night* is to think of music."

In the age of Shakespeare, England was 'a nest of singing birds'. Shakespeare had a great love for music. For him, the man that 'hears no music' is a disagreeable man, and is not to be trusted. John Bailey says that music was the one art outside his own, which Shakespeare understood and loved. He delighted very much in the art of voice and instrument in which his countrymen were achieving great triumphs.

Twelfth Night begins significantly with Orsino's words, "If music be the food of love, play on." Music is heard everywhere whether it be the court of Orsino or in the mansion of Olivia who is apparently in mourning, either in the form of a drunken catch by Sir Toby or the sweeter and more exotic melodies of the Clown who contributes most of the songs in the play.

Some of the sweetest songs in the play are:

1. *O mistress mine! Where are you roaming?* (Act II Scene III)
2. *Come away, come away, death* (Act II Scene IV)
3. *I am gone, Sir* (Act IV Scene II)
4. *When that I was and a little tiny boy* (Act V Scene I)

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11.____ is a fundamental chord of *Twelfth Night.*

12.____'s love is a kind of exaggerated love.

13.Sir Andrew's love for Olivia can be called a ____ love.

These songs are probably Shakespeare's rewriting of popular ballads of the day. It was a marked feature of the Elizabethan drama to introduce popular songs into the play. Source of these songs became favourite tunes of the theatre-going public of the day, which shows that in Shakespeare's time the English were a very musical race and the knowledge of music was wide spread.

All these songs are sung by Feste, the clown. It can be guessed from this fact that at this time Shakespeare's company had a comedian who was also an excellent singer. So Shakespeare considered it good business to assign all the singing to him, though the original intention was that Viola should sing some of these songs as is evident from the fact that Viola was to be presented to the Duke as a eunuch who could sing and speak, to him 'in many sorts of music'

(Act I Scene II line 54)

The songs are in folk idiom and their tunes are 'catch' in character. No wonder then that in Shakespeare's time they were very popular and everyone from the courtier down to the man in the street liked to hum those tunes. This was precisely Shakespeare's aim because as a popular dramatist, his chief concern was to present an entertaining that would amuse the public and fill the theatre.

But it would be a mistake to regard the songs merely as pure lyrics, though they can be enjoyed for their own sake also. The songs are appropriate to the setting in the play as all the songs of Shakespeare's plays are. They are introduced with a definite purpose and are related to the contexts in which they occur.

The first song "*O mistress mine*" is a simple ditty addressed by a lover to his beloved. It has the true Elizabethan ring and echoes the mood of the play. It recommends present enjoyment as a precaution against future disappointment. The atmosphere of the play which is one of mirth and merry-making throughout is reflected well by the song.

The second song "*Come away, come away, death*" highlights dis-appointed love and the pathetic end of a sad lower. It is a sentimental ditty representing the wasting power of thwarted love and fits exactly with the mood of the Duke as a disappointed lover. Orsino claims

"................. it is silly sooth.
And dallies with the innocence of love."

It is so sweet that

The spinsters and the knitters in the sun.
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones.
Do use to chant it.

Though it is on the theme of love as a sweet pain, Feste takes great pleasure in singing it and is generously rewarded by the Duke. The third song, "I am gone, Sir" occurs at the end of the Second Scene of the Fourth Act where Feste tantalizes Malvolio. There were no curtains on the Shakespearean stage to mark the end of a scene. The song, "I am gone, Sir" enables Feste to withdraw from the scene gradually and bears Irving's remark that no actor could ever complain that Shakespeare had sent him tamely off the stage.

"Imagine to yourself a stage projecting out into orchestra and without a drop scene, and try to devise an effective method of ending me situation, and you will then the better appreciate the genius of this song as covering the Clown's exit."

The reference to old Vice in the song hints at the end of Knavery. Feste bids farewell to 'goodman devil'. This means that disguise, gulling, revenge, etc, associated with the devil is going to end and the wedding is going to take peace. This is supported by the appearance of a real priest in the next scene.

Quite appropriately, Feste ends the play with a song, "*When that I was...*" round a popular refrain. For the rain it raineth everyday. It serves as the Epilogue and is a very suitable ending to this high-spirited comedy. John Weiss observes: "When the play is over the Duke plighted to his page, Olivia rightly married to the wrong man....." Feste is left alone on the stage. Then he sings a song which conveys to us his feelings of the world's impartiality; all the things proceed according to law..... people must abide by the consequences of their actions, for the rain it raineth every day. A little boy may have his toy, but a man must guard against knavery and thieving; marriage itself cannot be sweetened by swaggering; he who drinks with tosspots" will get a drunken head; it is a very old world and been so long ago that no change in its habits can be looked for. Thus, though this song is apparently comical and nonsensical it has a theme. Its theme is the pilgrimage of humanity from the cradle to the grave. Man lives in a hostile universe. He has to adjust himself a lot to lead a happy life. Richard Noble remarks that this ditty, 'serves as a commentary on the events of the play and is a fitting corollary to the first song, "O mistress mine."

2.10 Character of Duke Orsino

"Though Orsino is the principal male personage in the drama, he can hardly be styled its hero. Nor is there anything heroic in his nature."

He is no doubt "a noble duke in nature as in name." Olivia gives a thumb-nail sketch of his character. He is, she says,

Of great estate of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulge'd, free, learn'd and valiant'
And in dimension and the shape of nature

A gracious person Act I, Sc V, 260 – 263

But apart from this testimony and from the fact that he quickly inspires in Viola a deep and abiding love, we have rather to take his good qualities for granted.

As a lover Orsino is a supreme expression of way-wardness. When he expresses his love for Olivia, we think that that it is deeply rooted and firm. We feel sympathy for him. But this sympathy does not last long. He shifts his love from Olivia to Viola all on a sudden. True love takes a long time to strike deep roots in our hearts. But Orsino's love for Viola manifests itself in a twinkling of an eye. It is momentary and, in a sense, not genuine. His language too, is highly artistic.

He is a well-bred man with fine literary tastes and artistic temperament. He is a lover of music and hence he considers music to be the food of love. He wants to dip himself deep into the waters of music and die. He is a bit melancholic. So he asks the clown to sing a sad song to salve the wounds of love. Orsino is also an amiable egoist. He looks at everything from his point of view and thinks that he is a person of great importance. For instance, he thinks very high of his love and fails to understand the intensity of others' love. Further, his underestimation of the love of a woman is a vague and baseless generalization, because Viola herself proves that a woman's love for man is steady, steadfast and constant.

To conclude, Orsino is an imaginative personality building his own castles in the air. When his love fails to come to fruition by his refined measures, he wants to meet Olivia voluntarily. Here he is no longer idealistic., but pragmatic. That is why he appears before Olivia and pours forth his heart with unassumed dignity and openness. When he understands that has Olivia has given her hand to Sebastian in the presence of the priest, his visions are shattered. But he does not lose heart. He loves Viola and makes her "master's mistress." In the merry and festive world of *Twelfth Night* he is a true born child of jest and youthful jollity.

2.11 Character of Malvolio

Malvolio is the only character in *Twelfth Night* who does not fit into the comic fold. He is without humour in a humorous world. That is his chief folly and he pays a heavy price for that.

To start with, Malvolio is a good and trust worthy servant of Lady

Olivia. He is the steward of her household. He controls the other members of the house. He cares for the welfare of the lady at the cost of killing the joys of others. Olivia also has high regard for him. So she says,

I would not have him miscarry for the half of my dowry

He is often mistaken for a puritan. Malvolio is not a puritan disliking games and merriment. He has certain puritanical tendencies. These puritanical tendencies do not add to his merit. Rather they make him a monster of "midsummer madness". He is hated by all because he does not show love to anyone.

Malvolio is an ego centric man. He is swollen with pride. He thinks very high of himself. He regards others as 'idle shallow things', because he does not belong to their "element". That is why he does not share their joy. His excessive self- love arouses hatred in them. So they want to cheat him. According to the plan, Maria throws a love-letter which is supposed to have been written by Olivia. Malvolio picks up that letter. He was directed in it to appear in yellow stockings and cross-gratered pants. Malvolio appears accordingly before Olivia and puzzles her. Maria says that he was a bit distracted. Olivia also believes it and thinks that it is his "midsummer madness" and asks Maria and others to take care of Malvolio. These conspirators put him in a dark room. Then Maria asks the Clown to visit Malvolio in the guise of Sir Topas. The latter nags Malvolio sarcastically by asking him questions on the transmigration of souls. Malvolio feels that he is 'notoriously abused'. He asks the Clown to give him "some light and paper" whereon to write a note to Olivia.

Olivia wants to see Malvolio. He appears before the Lady with tempestuous anger. Fabian and the Clown confess that they have played a joke on him because he considered them "barren rascals". The Clown says that "whirligig of time" has brought its revenge upon Malvolio. Malvolio says, "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you". This shows that he has not turned a new leaf even after an agonizing experience.

The conspirators of Malvolio have ill - treated him beyond limits. This is indeed unbearable to a man who lacks humour, the safety value of human life. Their intention may be to curb "the stubborn and uncourteous parts" in him. But it is a negative approach as far as

Malvolio is concerned. Therefore critics like Lamb feel pity for Malvolio. They are of the view that he possesses estimable qualities.

2.12 Character of Viola

The remark that "Shakespeare has no heroes; he has only heroines", is true of his comedies and Viola is a standing example for the statement.

The figure of Viola in *Twelfth Night* is perfect in its balance of sensibility, gaiety, and strength. In her, Shakespeare has united qualities which he usually tends to divide between two different types of women. The disguise in man's dress is forced upon her by the needs of her situation. Ship-wrecked on the inhospitable coast of Illyria she finds that she can only take shelter with the Duke. She has heard of the Duke from her father. But yet she cannot enter the court as an unprotected girl. Hence she goes in man's attire. But throughout the play she shows nothing of Portia's or Rosalind's roguish pleasure in playing the part of a youth. Her trembling woman's heart is felt when she says. "Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness / Wherein the pregnant enemy does much".

That Viola is very beautiful is beyond doubt. Had Orsino been less absorbed in his self - pitying melancholy he might have guessed the real sex of his page, for he notes that she has Diana's lips and a maiden's shrill, small voice and that "all is semblative of a woman's part".

Viola is very loyal and true. Here is the "love indeed that is born in the silent depths of the spirit which cannot blazon itself upon the tongue." It is of herself she speaks when she tells of the pretended sister whose history was a blank:

"She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm!' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought.
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief, (Act II, iv, 111 – 116)

Though she is in love with Orsino, she pleads for him most earnestly with Olivia. But she is determined to marry him:

I'll do my best
To woo your lady— [Aside] Yet, a barful strife!
Whoe 'er I woo, myself would be his wife.
(Act I Sc IV, 40 – 42)

The dignity that prevents her deep tenderness of nature from ever slipping into a weakness shows itself when she rejects Olivia's proffered fee and with infinite delicacy she safeguards the reputation of the countess by leaving Malvolio in the belief that it is Orsino's ring with which he is sent in quest of her. Though her purse is very light, she generously shares it with her brother's friend, Antonio, and while repudiating with high-spirited scorn the charge of ingratitude by her quick wit, she understands that she is being mistaken for Sebastian.

Her masculine shrewdness and decision throw into delightful relief the thoroughly feminine lack of physical courage and the horror of bloodshed, which appear in the irresistibly comic affair of a duel with Sir Andrew. Yet this same timid maiden is ready, minutes later, at Orsino's bidding to offer herself to the sacrificial knife.

I, most jocund, apt and willingly,
To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die.
Act V. Sc i, 132 - 133.

But her devotion to the Duke is to prove itself not in death but in life. The Duke decides to marry Viola and Viola is 'the happiest soul alive' in *Twelfth Night*.

2.13 Character of Countess Olivia

Olivia is young and beautiful. The serious tendency of her mind has been aggravated by the death, in quick succession, of her father and her brother. Hence she has shut herself up for seven years, to nurse her grief. Everything in her surrounding bears witness to her austere temper.

Her household is governed by Malvolio, a puritanical steward who follows rigid principles of order. Though she entertains a boisterous kinsman, she seeks to confine his licence within endurable limits. She is an enemy to all false show inward or outward. The nice manner in which Olivia rejects Orsino's address shows that she pushes austerity to a point

where it amounts to indifference to the sufferings of others. But Olivia pays a heavy penalty, when her heart overflows with passion at the first sight of the disguised Viola. Vows of seclusion, dignity of rank end reserve of womanhood are all flung to the winds and her passion utters itself in ardent phrases.

The appearance of Sebastian helps Olivia to save herself from humiliation. A strain is indeed put upon our credulity when we see Sebastian yielding so promptly to the solicitations to the unknown fair one who flings herself at him. In welcoming the advances of Olivia he is unconsciously giving effect to her maxim that 'love sought is good, but given unsought is better'. Though the hurry shown by her in getting married is astonishing, it is understandable. She thinks that Cesario might change heart again. She decides to marry before such a thing happens. She gets a priest and marries Sebastian at a private chapel.

Her love for Cesario (Viola) reveals itself where she shouts at Sir Toby in the duel scene. After the marriage is over, Duke Orsino comes to see her to woo in person. But it is too late, Olivia is torn between love and courtesy. She welcomes Duke Orsino, but Cesario (Viola) who is standing by the Duke attracts her more. Her addressing Cesario as husband takes the mistaken identity to the climax while Sebastian's coming in the scene clears the whole confusion.

Olivia is good humoured. Her treatment of the clown is interesting. When the clown proves that she is a fool, as she is mourning the death of her brother who is in Heaven, she enjoys the fun. When she comes to know that Malvolio has been fooled by a forged letter; she immediately understands that it is only Maria who could have done that. When She understands that Sir Toby and Maria have joined together to gull Malvolio, she takes it lightly. She knows well that Malvolio, "is sick of self-love and taste with a distempered appetite .

Stated barely. Olivia's conduct in the play appears indelicate. But we do not get such an impression while reading the play because the whole story is treated in a spirit of pure romance. It is all too fanciful and poetic to be taken and criticized very seriously. Compared with Viola, Olivia does not appeal very strongly to our sympathies though there is a strain of kindliness in her.

Check Your Progress Questions

14 ____ does not fit into the comic fold.

15 In the end, the Duke decides to marry ____

2.14 Character of Feste

Feste, the clown is delightful throughout the play. Under the garb of a fool he

veils much philosophy. He may be treated as Shakespeare's mouthpiece commenting on the follies of the Illyrians. He is a wise fool among the foolish wise. Hence the title 'fool' ironically applied to him. He makes the wisest statements. We do not laugh at him but laugh with him and often emotionally identify ourselves with him. He belongs equally to either group of dramatic characters grave and the gay.

Feste as the favourite companion of all:

Feste is the prince of good companions. He is eagerly welcomed alike by the love-sick Duke, the elegant and fastidious Lady Olivia and the coarse and rough drunkards like Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. He is able to please Viola and touch not only her imagination but her pocket also by his more refined and diverting witticisms. At Olivia's house the Clown is a universal favourite. Malvolio alone, because of his self-love, despises him. He is the very life and soul of the plot that Maria lays for the "penance" of Malvolio. He makes the "most exquisite Sir Topas". Later he points out to Malvolio that he was avenging the insult of the steward in calling him a barren rascal, 'And thus the whirligig of time brings in the revenges.' He adapts his jokes to the dim twilight of Sir Andrew's understanding and he can sing saucy love songs to please Sir Toby and Maria. With the Lady Olivia to whom he is "corrupter of her words", he successfully employs his wit in an endeavour to modify her extravagance of woe:

Clown: Good Madonna, why moumest thou?
Olivia : Good fool, for my brother's death,
Clown : I think his soul is in hell, Madonna,
Olivia : I know his soul is in heaven, fool,
Clown : The more fool, Madonna, to *mourn for your*
brother's soul being in heaven. (Act I, Sc V, 65 - 70)

Feste's versatility as a humorist :

Feste's versatility as a humorist is remarkable. The shafts of his mild ridicule stir Olivia from the dark moods of sentimental melancholy. He laughs freely and heartily at Sir Andrew's absurdities and at Malvolio's overweening vanity. He diagnoses the Duke's distemper and gives him a humorous prescription for his speedy cure. Viola's reflections on the nature of successful clowning have been immediately suggested by observing Feste's skill:

He must observe their mood on whom he jests

The quality of persons and the time

His insight into character is combined with versatility; he readily estimates the company in which he is and suits his bearing to it, always "adapting himself to the mood of the moment". To quote his own description of himself he is 'for all waters'. (i.e. ready to play whatever part the occasion requires). He shows himself as a shrewd observer of men and things. One significant aspect of his character is his musical ability. He can sing both jolly and melancholy songs as he proves by entertaining such differently moulded persons as Sir Toby and Sir Andrew on the one hand and the Duke on the other. Shakespeare has put on his lips some of the finest songs in his plays.

The Latin word 'festus' means 'cheerful, gay'. As his very name implies, Feste is the very embodiment of the festive spirit of the comedy. A wiser and graver fool may have proved unsuitable to the atmosphere of the play. Feste, therefore, jests his way through scenes both grave and gay. Undoubtedly he is a master-craftsman in his profession.

2.15 Charactcr of Sir Toby Belch

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew :

The leader of the amusing group in *Twelfth Night* is Sir Toby Belch. Sir Andrew follows him faithfully as his shadow, butt, and hero-worshipper. Sir Toby fleeces Sir Andrew by encouraging his courtship of Olivia. Sir Toby's part is the more shameful, because he is Olivia's Uncle. But we do not feel anything like contempt for Sir Toby when he bids Sir Andrew put money in his purse. This is because of Sir Toby's rich humour which compensates for the sordidness of some of his actions.

His motto in life:

"I am sure care's an enemy to life" may be regarded as Sir Toby's motto in life. He does not see the point of Olivia's fruitless grief for her dead brother. For his own part he is ready to drink to his niece's health as long as there is a passage in his throat and drink in lliyria. In his humorous vein, he constructs a complete philosophy of life to justify his own riotious manners of living. Sir Toby's humour is most attractive in those scenes where he discourses learnedly on the virtues of late hours, eating and drinking, and

similar devices to banish care which is an "enemy to life". When he asks Malvolio "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" he makes a notable contribution to the philosophy of toleration which bids men live and let live.

His courage

Sir Toby's physical courage is undeniable. When Sebastian returns Sir Andrew's blow with compound interest, he intervenes promptly and energetically. He had but contempt for Sir Andrew, but still he would not stand aside and allow him to be defeated by a stranger. Sir Toby takes his wound on the head with the equanimity of a philosopher. Perhaps he could have given a better account of himself had he been sober at the time. But "it is all one has given me a bloody coxcomb, and there's an end on it" he says with admirable fortitude.

His marriage with Maria

There is no better proof of Sir Toby's sincere and thorough going love of fun than his marriage with Maria. It may appear foolish to others, but he himself regards it undoubtedly as the most sensible thing in the world. Maria's joke on Malvolio wins him over completely and he pays her the highest tribute in his power by marrying her. No doubt Maria despite her humble station in life, is worthy of the honour.

Thus the character of Sir Toby Belch remains lovable, in spite of many imperfections. The best of his redeeming traits is a certain fundamental sincerity and good-fellowship. The only instance of his failure in generosity is the last scene where he mercilessly abuses Andrew even without the least provocation. Even this may be forgiven for the sake of his earlier intervention in defence of Sir Andrew when attacked by Sebastian. In short, Sir Toby belongs to that class of characters in Shakespeare, of whom Falstaff is the prince, who is admittedly an immoral person but wins our heart by his abounding humanity and humour.

2.16 Character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek

Sir Andrew's dullness, stupidity and cowardice:

Sir Andrew is the butt on whom Sir Toby (like Maria and Feste) exercises his wit. He is a veritable incarnation of extreme dullness. He is a man of straw, a

contemptible idiot. whose thick blockhead was never penetrated by the faintest glimmerings of reason and intelligence and whose thin and vacant face was a true index of a heart devoid of a spark, of a spirit and manliness. His ignorance and blundering stupidity provide endless mirth to Sir Toby and others. He stumbles over the most common words like 'accost' in his own language and foreign languages are just Greek to him. But he affects like wiser men to regret a mis-spent youth. Being a coward, he is excessively fond of bullying. He offers to beat Malvolio probably because he expected a puritan not to retaliate. He offers to fight Cesario, because the boy does not seem to be brave. But when he is frightened by reports of Cesario's valour, he offers to buy him off with the gift of his horse.

Sir Andrew and Sir Toby:

Sir Andrew is a source of endless enjoyment and profit to Sir Toby. Sir Toby gulls him into an uneasy conviction that he may yet compass a marriage with Olivia, while his crowns are flowing in a steady stream from his own pockets into those of Sir Toby. He follows Sir Toby's lead, always repeats his "very phrases" and whatever Sir Toby bids him do, whether it be to stay a week longer or write a challenge, he mildly accepts. Up to the very end no suspicion of his friend's false play crosses his thoughts. It is difficult to say whether he appears battered and bruised from the duel. When Sir Toby enters presently, Sir Andrew with his old cordiality offers to help him so that they may be dressed together. Sir Toby turns on him savagely and calls him a coxcomb, a knave, and a gull. These are the last words addressed by Sir Toby to his old friend "sweet Sir Andrew."

Sir Andrew and Malvolio:

Sir Andrew is a knave. He is a conscious hypocrite who deliberately sets out to deceive the world. Malvolio, on the other hand deceives nobody but himself. Sir Andrew knows that he is a coward and yet wishes to appear like a hero as long as he may do so with impunity. Thus Sir Andrew's punishment is eminently deserved and hardly moves our compassion. The catastrophe of Malvolio may have a "kind of tragic interest" but that of Sir Andrew is comic in the highest degree. Malvolio stirs our sympathy but Andrew does not.

Check Your Progress Questions

16. The leader of the amusing group in *Twelfth Night* is ____

17. ____ stirs the sympathy.

18. In Feste's words, ____ is an "excellent devil of wit"

2.17 Character of Maria

Maria more than a mere menial:

Though called in the dramatis personae "Olivia's woman" Maria is something more than a mere servant. Malvolio calls her "Mistress Maria" and Olivia herself refers to her as "my gentlewoman" implying that she was some sort of a well born dependent rather than an ordinary servant. Maria dare not tell Malvolio to his face what she flings at him when his back is turned: "Go, shake your ears!". But she has a mind which is superior to her station in life. She is an "excellent devil of wit" whom Feste, a competent judge of character commends heartily when she marries Sir Toby.

Maria's plot against Malvolio

For the austere steward, Maria has an antipathy. It was partly due to his disposition and partly perhaps due to the result of jealousy for the favour in which he is held by her mistress. To gratify these feelings and to win the good graces of Sir Toby, she devises a plot involving her victim in deep discomfiture and affording us a scene of irresistible mirth. Her ambition and her revenge are equally satisfied by the result of the practical joke which she plays on Malvolio. What a marvelous insight into Malvolio's psychology she displays! She knows that he is not a puritan but a vain and self-conceited man. On that weakness in him she works. More that half the success of the plot depends upon the admirable letter of mystery and enticement, which she drops in Malvolio's way. It is a masterpiece of its kind and shows that Maria can imitate not only her mistress' "sweet Roman hand" but even her very phraseology and style.

Mario's marriage with Sir Toby :

Thus Maria is conceived as a "small, vivacious person, full of high spirits, and constantly bubbling over with ir-repressible laughter". Probably it is as much with a view of pleasing Sir Toby who cannot endure Malvolio) as to gratifying her own dislike of the steward that she proposes, and takes so much pains to carry out the plot against Malvolio. Its success at any rate leads to the much desired result, Sir Toby marrying her "in recompense" of her cleverness and trouble.

2.18 Questions :

1. Consider *Twelfth Night* as a typical Shakespearean comedy,

2. Write a note on Shakespeare's use of songs in *Twelfth Night*

3. Write an essay on *Twelfth Night* as a comedy of self — deception

4. Is it true to say that Shakespeare has ridiculed Puritanism in *Twelfth Night?*

5. "Shakespeare's plays have no heroes, only heroines" — Discuss with reference to *Twelfth Night?*

6. Write an essay on the tragic element or the note of pathos in *Twelfth Night?*

7. Write an essay on Shakespeare's treatment of love in *Twelfth Night?*

2.19 Key For Check Your Progress

1. *Apolonius and Silla* 2. What You Will 3. romance and comedy
4. 17 5. romantic, realistic, tragic, serious to dark 6. *Twelfth Night*
7. adventure, disguise, confusion arising out of mistaken identity
8. fools and clowns 9. Wit and humour 10. human follies and vices
11. Love 12. Orsino's 13. forced. 14. Malvolio
15. Viola 16. Sir Toby Belch 17. Malvolio 18. Maria

2.20 Further Reading:

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Unit – 3

Space for Hints

RICHARD II

3.1. Introduction

Unabated patriotic fervour was one reason for the popularity of Shakespeare's history plays. He wrote these plays when England was proud of its history. Shakespeare's history plays exploited the conscious patriotism of the decade after the Spanish Armada and instructed in an inquisitive public in some of the facts and legends of English history.

"The great use of the historic drama" says Coleridge, "is familiarizing men to the great names of the country, and exciting patriotism".

For his English history plays, Shakespeare drew heavily from Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland.* Shakespeare found a certain pattern working about, during the time between Richard II and Henry VIII. Richard II is dethroned and his throne is usurped by Henry IV. This usurpation sows the seeds of disorder in the country. The disease is then imported into the body-politic and there is civil war at home.

3.2. Objectives

- To make the students understand the elements of Romantic comedy
- To make the students assess Shakespeare's contribution to English Literature

3.3. Structure

31. Introduction
3.2. Objectives
3.3. Structure
3.4 Disorder and Chaos
3.5. Need for Political Stability
3.6 Divine Right Theory
3.7 Destiny
3.8 Two Tetrologies
3.9 Plot Construction
3.10 Story in brief
3.11 As A Historical Play
3.12 The character of King Richard II
3.13 Character of Bolingbroke

3.14 Imagery in *Richard II*

3.15 Questions

3.16 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions

3.17 Further Reading

3.4 Disorder and Chaos

Hence, the picture we get from Shakespeare's Histories is that of disorder and its consequences. Unsuccessful war abroad and civil war at home are the significant aspects of the theme; victory abroad and harmony at home are the expectations, and the fear of disorder is never absent. Behind disorder, it was then believed, is some sort of order or "decree" on earth and that order has its counterpart in heaven.

If there is a disturbance in the order, there will be chaos. If a person tries to occupy the kingdom, which is not his, then music is untuned and tumult is the outcome; if the people get a bad king they are expected to put up with difficulties thinking that God has sent this type of king as punishment for their faults.

Richard II illustrates this theme; when the Duchess of Gloucester begs her brother-in-law, John of Gaunt, to avenge the death of her husband who had been murdered by Richard, he refuses:

God's is the quarrel; for god's substitute,
His deputy anointed in His sight,
Has caused his death: the which if wrongfully,
Let Heaven revenge; for I may never lift
An angry arm against His minister. (Act I, Sc.ii, 37-41)

3.5. Need for Political Stability

Hence it can be easily seen that English scene, viewed from an Elizabethan point of view was dominated by one urgent need: the need for political stability, governed by an undisputed, monarchy. Consequently, all the history plays of Shakespeare concern themselves with kingship. The burning question is whether the man who occupies the throne can hold the loyalty and obedience of the realm. If he can, the reward is stability at home and foreign conquests abroad. Military aggrandizement is an automatic index of the success of the reign.

> **Check Your Progress Questions**
> 1. *Richard II* is an ____play
> 2. From which source Shakespeare borrowed his material?

3.6 Divine Right Theory

Shakespeare believed in the theory of Divine Right of Kings. This theory held that an anointed King could not be resisted except at the price of mortal sin. The reason was that the Church and the State were bound up together and the Coronation service was almost a sacrament. In fact this idea came from the Middle Ages, when the feudal system drew its ultimate sanction from the notion of a descending scale of authority starting with God and ending with the lowest forms of life. This would mean that the king naturally drew authority from above and transmitted it to his subordinates. To challenge the king was to question the divinely ordained system of created life. This theory was given a violent boost by the Tudor dynasty who raised it to the status of an effective historical myth.

To the modern man, the theory of Divine Right looks merely silly and pretentious. It is only when he pauses to get the matter in its historical context that he sees the underlying practicality. In an England still largely medieval, physical power could not be concentrated at the centre. Communications were slow, and no one ever knew with any certainty how things were developing in remote parts of the country. Success depended on the support of individual noble men, each of whom would put his personal army in the field in the confidence that its primary loyalty was to him and to whatever cause he chose to follow, granting this situation. It is difficult to see how a country could be united without the doctrine of a Divine Right or a similar one. When power is in the hands of a number of heavily armed feudal overlords, one of whom has the title of a king; some very powerful sanction is needed to unite the others in subservience to him. Hence to call in the church to bless the crown, to warn that rebellion displeases God as well as man, seems only common sense, even if the metaphysic background is discarded.

So, the content of the two tetralogies can be briefly stated thus: The king is Lord's anointed and ought to prevail. But if he is a weak king, like Richard II he will not prevail. His power will be wrested from him, by people like Bolingbroke. If that happens, the usurper will have himself crowned and will then proclaim that God fights on his side. But, it is the duty of all men to ignore this claim. When Richard is deposed, and Bolingbroke ascends the throne, the Bishop of Carlisle sounds a stern note of warning:

My lord of Hereford here, when you call king,
Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king:

And if you crown him, let me prophecy:
The blood of English shall manure the ground,
And future ages groan for this foul act
Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;
Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny
Shall here inhabit, and this land be called
The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.

(Act IV, Sc.i, 134-144)

3.7 Destiny

Shakespeare's intention in writing the history plays was not very much to glorify individual characters. He was primarily concerned with the destiny of his country. It is England, which appears as an omnipresent and immortal figure in the plays. The plays deal with the realities of power and authority. Their analysis of individual character, their incidental observation of life, their humour, their pathos - are all contained within this framework.

Besides the patriotic sentiment that suffuses the plays, the working of Fate or Providence is also prevalent. Shakespeare attempts to bring out in his histories, the secret, but sure mechanism of NEMESIS the inevitable recoil of a man's deeds on himself. The history of the English kings is essentially a history of their misdeeds which have either cost them their lives or plunged the nation into turmoil. The monstrous acts of Richard III, the fatal weakness of King John, the unnatural self-love of Richard II, the unscrupulousness of Henry IV, and the over-vaulting ambition of Henry V, pave the way for many a national disaster, exemplifying thereby the inexorable workings of a moral law in the universe.

3.8 Two Tetrologies

The First Folio has ten plays based on English history. Shakespeare has given in them the history of nearly 350years. They are distributed with a curious regularity. First there is a sequence of four closely linked plays; the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III.* Then follows an isolated play *KING JOHN*. There is another sequence of four plays *RICHARD II*, the two parts of *HENRY IV* and *HENRY V*. And there is a second isolated play, *HENRY VIII*. Disregarding the two

isolated plays, it can be further said that the two tetralogies make a single unit. Through these plays Shakespeare links the present happenings with the past.

Why Shakespeare wrote the second half earlier can only be guessed. Perhaps he thought that vice was easier to picture than virtue; and that it would be safer to spend his present energies on picture of chaos and a great villain, leaving the more difficult pictures of prince Perfection to his maturity. In the first tetralogy particularly the Tudor myth and the Morality idea of REPUBLICA are the unifying motives.

3.9 Plot Construction

There is nothing much to be said about plot construction in the histories. Shakespeare does not follow any set pattern in them. He does not introduce a rising action, a climax, a falling action and a conclusion as evidenced in his later plays. The action generally moves along the course of history to a climax. There are no high complications. There are no sub-plots parallel to the main theme in some of the plays. Consequently, it is felt that the history plays of Shakespeare do not hold the stage as do his comedies. But it is to the credit of the mastermind that he has reduced the spectacular and thrilling events of long history to a narrow compound of three hours in his plays. The solemnity and the grandeur of English history is kept throughout along with the golden lustre of the dramatist's poetry.

3.10 Summary of the Play

ACT-I

Scene i:

In a room of the royal castle at Windsor, the king is talking with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and other nobles. Gaunt's son, Henry surnamed Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford has publicly accused of high treason. Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk. Richard summons "the accuser and the accused" to a hearing in the royal presence.

On entering the chamber, the contending parties each make a profession of respect to the King, who, turning to Bolingbroke, asks him to list his accusations against Mowbray.

But Bolingbroke first of all hurls a general charge of 'foul traitor' at his rival; Mowbray defies his accuser and calls him 'a slanderous coward and a villain', and to maintain the of his statements, he offers to meet his accuser under

> **Check Your Progress Questions**
>
> 3 ____ appears as an immortal figure in the plays
>
> 4.____ , ____ are the isolated play in Shakespeare's history plays.
>
> 5 ____ of Shakespeare do not hold the stage as do his comedies

any conditions of judicial combat or in any other form of combat, prescribed by the laws of chivalry. Hastily Bolingbroke throws down his glove, which is quickly picked up by Mowbray as a symbol that the challenge has been accepted.

After further prompting by Richard, Bolingbroke gives details of his charges against Mowbray; he accuses him of embezzling funds intended for the payment of the soldiers and of plotting the death of the Duke of Gloucester the King's uncle. He undertakes to substantiate these accusations by taking the evil traitor's life in mortal combat.

Richard assures Mowbray that he may fearlessly answer these charges without fear of prejudice, in spite of the fact that Bolingbroke is his (i.e. that king's) cousin, since "impartial are our eyes and ears". Mowbray admits having pocketed a quarter of the sum which was earmarked to pay the King's soldiers at Calais, but this, he pleads, was only to recoup himself for expenses incurred on a previous account. Nor is he guilty of Gloucester's murder one merely did nothing to prevent it. Mowbray admits, however, that he once tried to murder Gaunt, but he has since apologised to the party concerned and hopes that the incident is now closed.

After listening patiently to the accuser and the accused, the King attempts, with an assumption of playful good humour to reconcile the parties: "Our doctors say this is no month to bleed" and he is anxious to solve the arguments by some method other than their shedding each other's blood in combat. But appeasement is impossible, for each believes his honour at stake. As Mowbray tells the King: "Mine honour is my life.... take honour from me, and my life is done". Bolingbroke confesses to similar feelings, and King Richard appoints a time and place for their meeting, at Conventry upon St. Lambert's Day.

Scene ii:

The next scene is devoted to a conversation between John of Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester, widow of his murdered brother. This takes place in Gaunt's place, where she has come to plead with him to do something about the murder of her husband. Gaunt, however, has decided to let the matter rest and defending his decision, explicitly insists that Richard himself was a party to the crime. Yet the king, as God's deputy cannot be the object of revenge. God alone can punish him.

Although the Duchess taunts him with cowardice and despair, and warns him of threat to his own life, Gaunt persists in his attitude.

Such reasoning on the part of a brother seems needlessly callous to the Duchess: but her impassioned query, "Where then, alas, may I complain myself?" he replies again, "To God the window's champion and defence". As the tearful Duchess takes her leave, she entrusts him with a message for Edmund Langley, Duke of York.

Scene iii:

It is now St. Lambert's Day. At an open place near Coventry the lists are set out for the duel between Bolingbroke and Mowbray. All the formalities of trial by combat are carefully carried out. The Lord Marshal announces that the two champions are properly armed and accompanied by their respective heralds. Trumpets announce the arrival of the King and his retinue, and Richard ceremoniously invites the champions to declare their business. The armoured defendant and appellant respond in turn, each professing his truth and nobility of purpose. Each then takes devoted leave of his sovereign, and Bolingbroke bids farewell to his father, old John of Gaunt. There is a touch of irony in Richard's reply to Bolingbroke, and a touch of affectionate approval in his valediction to Mowbray.

The contestants are handled their weapons and the charge is sounded. But as they prepare to fight, the King suddenly throws down his warder (baton), and defendant and appellant are bidden to say aside their lances and disarm, while Richard withdraws with his councillors.

Presently Richards emerges and announces his decision: in order to preserve internal unity and peace - since the sounds and sight of such a war like tournaments may bring about civil war - Richard exiles Bolingbroke for ten years and banishes Mowbray for life.

Although Mowbray laments his 'heavy sentence' of life-long banishment, and reiterates his innocence, he retains his knightly attitude and makes a dignified retirement from public life. Though he cannot refrain from suggesting that Richard's decision is unmerited, yet he royally submits to it, and ruefully comments that in foreign lands he will live a speechless existence. Then Richard calls them both before him to take an oath never to see each other. Both swear upon Richard's royal sword that they will not conspire against him in exile and the

King appears to be satisfied. After once again denying to Bolingbroke the charges against him, Mowbray goes into exile.

Out of pity for the sorrowing, old Gaunt, Richard remits four years of Bolingbroke's sentence, and when the old man laments that he may not live even six more years to see his banished heir again, the King reminds that, as a member of the royal council, Gaunt was a consenting party to the arrangement. Bolingbroke's own comment on Richard's remission is to observe how fine a thing it is to be an absolute monarch. Gaunt bitterly comments on the personal conflict between his duty as a royal judge and a true father. After repeating the six years banishment order, Richard departs with his nobles and bodyguard.

Bolingbroke's friends press round him with expressions of condolence, but he is not easily drawn into conversation. Gaunt tries to cheer his son with the advice that he should look upon his absence not as a lengthy exile but as a holiday journey abroad; yet Bolingbroke's answer is to pray for sympathy as an unhappy man unjustly banished.

Scene iv:

Back at the court the Duke of Aumerle reports to the King that he made good bye to Bolingbroke at the first cross roads with no love lost. Aumerle is definitely not sympathetic towards Bolingbroke and Richard, noticing this, takes him into his confidence, revealing to his cousin his secret reasons for Bolingbroke's banishment; he has seen Gaunt's son courting the common people "with humble and familiar courtesy", wooing the poor with crafty smiles; behaving generally as if he were the next heir to the crown of England.

Green, one of the king's servants, then brings to his master's urgent notice the rebellion in Ireland, which is quickly getting out of hand and weakening Richard's power abroad; plans must be made at once to stop the insurrection. Richard decides to lead personally an expedition to Ireland, by extorting the necessary funds from the nobles and leasing out portions of the royal demesne(Crown lands).

At this stage, Bushy, another of the King's retainers, arrives with the news that John of Gaunt is grievously ill and has sent for the King. Richard callously remarks that he hopes Gaunt's physician will help him to his grave immediately, since the contents of his treasure chests will greatly assist in fitting out of the proposed expedition to Ireland.

Act -II

Scene i:

In an apartment of Ely House in London, old Gaunt lies ill. He is asking his brother York whether the king will really come to his bedside as he is anxious to spend his last breath in giving wise advice to the rash and heedless young monarch. Gaunt believes that although Richard would never heed his advice during his lifetime, yet the solemn counsel he intends uttering on his deathbed will incline him to listen, since "the tongues of dying men enforce attention". But the Duke of York warns the dying Gaunt that his council will be wasted upon Richard, whose ears are open only to flattery: it is fruitless to try and direct one who against reasonable and wholesome advice and is determined to go his own way. But Gaunt feels that the King's riotous ways cannot last and that he will soon be tired of his impudent behaviour.

Then the King enters, accompanied by the Queen, Aumerle, Bushy, Green, and others and York advise Gaunt to deal mildly with Richard on account of his youth. But on Richard's arrival, the dying duke grimly plays upon the name of "Gaunt"; gaunt he is from 'watching over' "sleeping England" and by 'fasting' from the sight of his banished son; he solemnly warns the king that it is he who lies "in reputation sick" that a thousand flatterers sit within his crown and he has become "landlord of England" and not King.

The King is obviously moved by his uncle's words, but that only makes him all the more savage in retort; he rounds on the sick man in a flash of temper and with a touch of shrill hysteria, calls him 'A lunatic, lean-witted fool' who dares with a frozen admonition to make pale the royal cheek of Richard. But Gaunt remains unmoved; with the prophetic inspiration of a dying man, he continues to rebuke his nephew for spoiling the great family founded by Edward III, and before being borne by his attendants to die, he bitterly upbraids Richard for the murder of Gloucester.

York attempts to calm the angry King and says that Gaunt loves him as dearly as his own exiled son; but Richard refuses to be pacified, and when, a moment later Northumberland arrives to announce the death of Gaunt, Richard dismisses it briefly and callously "So much for that"! The brash young King thinks of his Irish wars, and his first move is to seize his uncle's plate, coin and

revenues, which otherwise would have gone to Gaunt's son, Henry Bolingbroke and to forbid Bolingbroke's return to claim his inheritance and his father's title as Duke of Lancaster.

York is outraged by this act of tyranny and attempts to change the King's mind by pointing out the inevitable consequences of such an act. It cuts him to the heart that his sovereign apex of the feudal pyramid should have such small respect for the broad base on which it rests; he points out that if Bolingbroke is deprived of his legitimate rights, then the King is taking away privileges conferred by time, thereby weakening his own title to the crown. He dwells on the patience with which he himself has endured the ill-doings of his sovereign, whom he contrasts with the Black Prince. But Richard refuses to be moved and he sends Bushy to attend to the business of seizing Gaunt's properties, since he plans to leave for Ireland the next day. York departs, shaking his head; if Richard is determined to ruin himself, he can only wash his hands off the whole business - "I'll not be by the while". As Richard himself goes out with the Queen and attendant nobles, he gives instructions that York is to act as regent during his absence in Ireland, since his uncle "is just and always loved us well".

Only the barons Northumberland, Willoughby, and Ross remain in the chamber and they immediately begin to discuss both the injustice done to Bolingbroke and the many acts of extortion which the king spurred on by flatters, has committed against both nobility and commoners. But Northumberland has news that Bolingbroke, hearing of the King's acts against him and his estate, has already raised a force of men three thousand strong, and is planning to cross from Brittany in eight ships. He is only waiting for the King's departure to Ireland before coming. At this news the three decide to go to Ravenspurgh where Henry plans to land.

Scene ii:

A little later Bushy and Bagot are comforting the Queen at Windosor Castle; she has just parted with Richard, who has left with his expedition of Ireland, and she has forebodings of misfortune: "Some unborn sorrow is coming towards me", she declares; yet, for the moment she cannot understand the cause of this anxiety. Bushy explains that she is probably overwrought by the King's departure, and that her fears for the future are sheer fantasy.

Green appears on the scene, bringing bad news. He hopes that the King "is not yet shipp'd for Ireland," because Bolingbroke has returned and Northumberland, young Percy, Ross, Willoughby, and other nobles have gone to his support. What is more, when he (i.e.; Green) proclaimed Northumberland a traitor, the Earl of Worcester, Northumberland's brother, broke his staff of office as Lord Chamberlain, and also fled to Bolingbroke, taking the household servants with him. The Queen now understands the meaning of her forebodings, and gives way to open despair.

Old York enters, the burden of his regency heavy upon him. He declares that so responsible an office is not for an old man like himself during such an emergency. He feels that Richard's former excesses have brought about this crisis, and that the king will have to pay a heavy price for them. Not only have many of the nobles fled to Bolingbroke, but the royal coffers are empty and Parliament is disgruntled; messengers must be sent to Ireland, arms must be collected, and, troops conscripted. Then a servant arrives with yet another "tide of woe". York's son, Aumerle, cannot be found and the Duchess of Gloucester has passed away at Plashy. Overwhelmed by these tidings the old man sees no way out for himsef as both Richard and Bolingbroke are his kinsmen, and he knows not "how or which way to order these affairs".

As York departs with the Queen to arrange for her safety, Bushy, Green and Bagot, sensing trouble for all friends of the king, determine to flee. Bushy and Green play to seek refuge in Bristol Castle with the Earl of Wiltshire, a strong supporter of Richard while Bagot decides to join the King in Ireland. He feels that they are parting for ever.

Scene iii:

Meanwhile, Bolingbroke and Northumberland have joined forces in the wilds of Gloucestershire and marching towards Berkeley Castle. As they go along talking together and are politely praising each other's virtues. Northumberland's son young Henry Percy catches up with them. He brings tidings of his uncle, the Earl of Worcester, who has broken his staff of office and forsaken the court to join Henry Bolingbroke. When Northumberland sees that his son does not recognize Bolingbroke, he asks him, "Have you forgot the Duke Hereford boy?" to which he says: "I never in my life did look on him"; and so he is formally introduced. Bolingbroke fondly greets the youth, and they are soon joined by the Lords Ross

and Willoughby; he thanks the barons for rallying around him, and hints at more material rewards when his fortune matures.

Lord Berkeley then arrives, having been sent by York to enquire why Bolingbroke has returned before the period of his exile is over and thus disrupts the land with threats of civil war. But Bolingbroke who has been addressed as "my Lord Hereford" replies that his proper title is "Duke of Lancaster" and demands that Berkeley call him by that designation if he desires an answer. Berkeley declares that he has no intention of depriving Bolingbroke of a single honourable title which legitimately belongs to him.

All the warning is cut short by the arrival of the Duke of York and his attendants. When Bolingbroke kneels to his uncle the regent bluntly challenges his false obeisance; bitterly he upbraids Bolingbroke for his "gross rebellion", and laments that his palsied arm cannot chastise him. He tells his nephew not to pretend respect by using honourable titles, and reminds him that, although the King is absent, he is yet there in the person of the regent.

Bolingbroke thereupon assures his uncle that the object of his return is nothing more than the securing of his father's estate and title, which are his by right of inheritance. He asks York to look upon his action objectively: would he like to see his nephew deprived of his legitimate rights while untitled spendthrifts are suddenly raised to honourable positions by the king? He reminds his uncle that he has also a son who hopes to inherit his father's lands.

The rebel lords are prompt with further assurances that Bolingbroke has come only to claim his lawful dues. York will not admit that his nephew is in the right; but although Bolingbroke is not entitled to take the law into his own hands in this way, the regent cannot deny that he has a legitimate grievance.

Thus, York promises to remain neutral during the coming clash with Richard and even consents to accompany Bolingbroke to Bristol which is held by Bushy, Green and some of the kings' forces "the caterpillars" of the kingdom, whom Bolingbroke has sworn to weed out.

Scene iv:

While these events are in progress, the Earl of Salisbury, in Wales, is talking to a Welsh captain whose forces have gathered to fight on the king's side. But as Richard has not returned from Ireland after ten days of waiting, they

believe him to be dead, and have decided to go home. Salisbury fails to get them to wait even one more day.

After the captain has departed, the Earl reflects on Richard's desperate position. He has a foreboding that the setting sun is a token of future woe and unrest; the King's supporters are offering their services to his enemies and his fortunes are indeed at a low ebb.

Act -III

Scene i:

When this scene opens, Bolingbroke has taken the city of Bristol and captured two of Richard's closest advisers, Bushy and Green.

The two prisoners are brought before Bolingbroke, who immediately sentences them to death because they have "misled a prince, a royal king", separating him from his queen, causing him to misunderstand his cousin, and taking as their own the possessions of the banished man.

Bushy replies that death is more welcome to him than Bolingbroke is to England, while Green cries out against the injustice of their sentence.

After Northumberland and some of the soldiers have taken away the prisoners to be executed, Bolingbroke turns to his uncle, the Duke of York, and asks him to despatch letters to Richard's Queen (now staying at York's house) presenting his compliment and fully expressing his friendship and regard for her.

Bolingbroke thereupon calls his followers to prepare themselves for a continuation of the campaign, which will now be directed towards the conquest to Wales.

Scene ii:

Meanwhile, King Richard has returned from Ireland with the Bishop of Carlisle and Aumerle, has arrived before Barkloughly Castle, on the coast of Wales.

To stand again on his native soil deeply moves the King. Taking up a handful of earth, he calls upon the very soil to fight for him by confronting the "foul" rebels with nettles and venomous reptiles; the stones themselves will become armed soldiers, declares Richard, before he will yield to an usurper.

The Bishop tells the King to have no fears for the future; Richard rules by virtue of God's power and if he will but use all the resources at his disposal, heaven will assist his cause. Aumerle however adds the disconcerting comment

that Bolingbroke has been growing ever stronger by winning over the King's friends and forces.

In reply to this warning about neglecting the means granted by heaven, the King declares that the rebels will be terror stricken by the news that the ruler "elected by the Lord" for whom heaven and its angels fight, has returned. He is convinced that the efforts of mortal men can never succeed in deposing a formally anointed monarch; he shall rise like the sun in the eastern sky and with the majesty of his royal apparition frighten away the treasons of the night.

At this moment Salisbury arrives to tell the King that his Welsh contingent has gone over to Bolingbroke; the King, he declares, has arrived a day too late. These tidings depress Richard, whom Aumerle attempts to comfort. Finally the King takes heart in the assertion that his own presence on the field of battle is worth that of twenty thousand Welshmen, while in any case, his uncle, the Duke of York, has sufficient forces to do all that is necessary for suppressing the rebellion.

Sir Stephen Scroop now appears, and his face promises more evil tidings. Richard declares that he is prepared to hear of worldly losses - he is even prepared to hear that Bolingbroke strives after the crown since the worst that can befall is death, which is, in any case, inevitable. Scroop is glad that the King is prepared to hear with fortitude "the tidings of calamity" and tells his lamentable tale: Bolingbroke is building up a mighty force - all the people are flocking to his banner and almost the whole kingdom is in arms against the crown. Where then, demands Richard, are the men of his party? "Where is Bagot? What has become of Bushy? Where is Green?" Have they, too, made peace with Bolingbroke? When Scroop answers: "Peace have they made with him, indeed, my lord", Richard entirely miscontrues this ambiguous statement and calls them "villains, vipers" only to learn that Bolingbroke has had them executed at Bristol.

This news serves to intensify the King's mounting sorrow and despair; he sees himself walking in a long procession of kings born to illustrate the tragical fall of princes, who are set on high but who in the end must live with bread, taste grief, and need friends with the humble. Bolingbroke is victor and Death is the lord of kings - "nothing can we call our own but death".

The Bishop of Carlisle again ventures a rebuke: God helps those who help themselves; wise men act and do not give way to sorrow; if the King gives way to

fear, he will be slain; no worse fate can overtake him if he resolves to fight. The King is momentarily heartened by this advice and resolves to exchange blows with Bolingbroke to decide which one of them is to fall; he asks Scroop where the Duke of York is with his army. Scroop has further disastrous news; even York has gone over to Bolingbroke's side, while all the feudal castles in the north have surrendered to the rebel force.

Richard's cup of bitterness is now full and there is nothing left to mar the luxury of his grief; he resolves to hate "everlastingly" any one who tries to offer him comfort; Aumerle is instructed to discharge the remnants of the royal army so that the soldiers may return to plough the land which has some prospect of yielding them a harvest, since he (i.e; the King) has nothing further to give them. As for himself, he decides to take refuge in nearby Flint Castle, and "there I'll pine away".

Scene iii:

Some time later Bolingbroke and his forces appear before Flint Castle in Wales; Northumberland declares that 'the news is very fair.... "Richard not far from hence hath hid his head"; But the Duke of York is still loyal to Richard in spirit and reproves Northumberland for speaking with disrespect. The latter replies that the Duke mistakes his intention - he has merely omitted Richard's proper title of "King" for the sake of brevity; Bolingbroke in support of his henchman, tells his uncle not to misconstrue Northumberland's words. This leads York to advise his rebellious nephew not to take upon himself more than rightfully belongs to him for fear that the heavens above punish him for his presumption. Bolingbroke declares that he has no intention of doing so.

Henry Percy now arrives with the news that Richard has taken refuge in the nearby castle, and with him are Aumerle, Salisbury, Scroop, and the Bishop of Carlisle. Bolingbroke orders his trumpeters to sound a parley; he wishes to swear allegiance to the King provided that his sentence of banishment shall be repealed and his lands restored to him; otherwise he will enforce his demand at the point of the sword. At the same time he intends to parade his army before the walls, to enable Richard and his party to observe his well-equipped forces.

When the parley is sounded there is an answering trumpet call from within and a few moments later Richard and his few remaining followers appear on the battlements. York, on looking up comments on the King's royal appearance, and

Henry Percy himself declares that Richard looks like "the blushing discontented sun.."

Northumberland comes forward to deliver Bolingbroke's message but is immediately checked by the King who sternly rebukes him for not kneeling in the royal presence, and declares that heaven's vengeance will fall on the rebels and their children. God, says he "mustering armies of pestilence" to aid the royal cause: Northumberland is to inform his master that before he can seize the crown, the peaceful face of England will become bloodstained and disfigured. Undeterred, Northumberland delivers his master's message" lineal royalties and to beg enfranchisement" and he concludes with the solemn oath that once the King has granted these requests, the rebel leader will immediately dismiss his forces and resume the "faithful service of your majesty". To all this, Richard very civily replies that Northumberland is to tell master that he is "right welcome hither", and that all his demands, which are reasonable, will be carried out without reservation.

But the strain of maintaining a false show of courtesy is too great; turning to Aumerle, Richard declares that he has debased himself in speaking so fairly with traitors. Should he rather defy his enemies? Aumerle counsels prudence: fight the intruders with gentle words till time brings friends and forces with which to meet them on a more equal footing. But the King whose pride has been deeply wounded, cries out that if God will give him strength equal to his grief, he will then be able to deal with the situation. As he watches Northumberland returning from the rebel camp with Bolingbroke's answer, Richard again loses his dignity and gives to sorrow. He longs to die and to be buried where his subjects' feet may hourly trample on their soverign's head. He grows more fanciful as self-pity leads him from one concept to another; he scatters himself, as Coleridge expresses it into a multitude of images and endeavours to shelter himself from that which is around him by a cloud of his own thoughts. He finds Aumerle, his tender-hearted cousin, weeping beside him and brings him into the picture. The two of them, he continues, will jest thoughtlessly with their troubles, hollowing out a pair of graves with their tears!

This outburst of hysteria is momentarily checked by the return of Northumberland, who asks the King to descend the lower courtyard where Bolingbroke is waiting to talk to him. As Richard and his followers leave the

upper ramparts, Northumberland informs Bolingbroke that the King is prattling foolishly because of his grief.

In the lower court King Richard brushes aside Bolingbroke's sustained assurances of respect; he sees himself as a royal martyr who has become a victim of circumstance; bidding the kneeling Bolingbroke rise, he openly admits that he is in his power, and after giving the latter back his land and the right to assume the title of Duke of Lancaster, he proposes that they immediately set out for London.

Scene iv:

Meanwhile, Richard's Queen has taken refuge at Langley, the seat of the Duke of York. She enters the garden with two of her ladies and, while they are trying to decide how they will entertain themselves, a gardener comes in with two servants to whom he gives directions which the ladies cannot but overhear. One of these servants asks him why they should take the trouble to keep the orchard and flower-beds neat when the whole country is overgrown with weeds and is being ruined by Richard's extravagant supporters. The gardener thereupon breaks the news that Bushy whose "broad-spreading leaves" did shelter these weeds, has been taken prisoner by Bolingbroke. It is great pity, continues the gardener, that Richard did not take the trouble to put his land in order when he had the opportunity; now he is almost certain to be deposed.

The Queen unable to restrain herself any longer, comes forward and angrily demands to know how the gardener has heard of Bolingbroke's triumph and how he dare prophesy Richard's deposition. The gardener replies that although he has little joy in relating these tidings, yet he is repeating "no more than everyone doth know". After ruefully commenting on the irony of a situation in which she is the last to hear of tidings which most urgently affect her position, the Queen instructs her ladies to prepare for their immediate departure for London. As she leaves, she expresses the wish that, "for telling me these news of woe", the gardener's plants may never flourish. The gardener himself is saddened by the Queen's sorrow, and resolves to plant a bed of rue (a herb symbolical of pity) "In the remembrance of a weeping queen".

Act - IV

Scene i:

Parliament is meeting in Westminster Hall to witness Richard's abdications. But first there is the matter of a quarrel between Bagot and Aumerle

which must be settled. Bagot accuses Aumerle of plotting the death of the Duke of Gloucester; one after another several lords are drawn into the quarrel and numerous challenges are given until Bolingbroke takes complete control of the situation and firmly suppresses the unruly peers. Even the banished Mowbray is said to have accused Aumerle but when Aumerle demands that he be recalled from exile so that the truth of his statement may be challenged the Bishop of Carlisle announces the death of Mowbray in Venice, after an illustrious career fighting against the Turks.

The Duke of York now comes in bearing the news that Richard is willing to abdicate in Bolingbroke's favour, but when the latter agrees to ascend the regal throne the outraged Carlisle breaks out in protest. Richard, he declares, is still the King; there is no one present noble enough to sit in judgment on royalty, and even if Richard were a common thief, he should not be condemned unheard. If Bolingbroke ascends the throne, it cannot be in God's name, and the Bishop goes on to warn the rebel lords of what must inevitably follow the elevation of a traitor. "The blood of English shall manure the ground, and future ages groan for this foul act." The country will not be able to avoid further civil war.

Northumberland takes it upon himself to order the instant arrest of the Bishop, who is committed to the custody of the Abbot of Westminster until his day of trial. But Bolingbroke is anxious that it should not appear that he is taking the kingdom by force: there must be no doubt that Richard has in fact voluntarily surrendered his rights. Thus Bolingbroke orders York to bring Richard in, that Parliament may witness his surrender of the crown. York returns at once with the king and officers bearing the crown.

Richard asks why he has been summoned before a king without being given enough time to rid himself of those kingly thoughts which had occupied his mind while he himself was King. Sarcastically he protests that he has not had time to adjust his behaviour to the new circumstances and to ingratiate himself with flattery. Looking around at the assembled nobles, he comments bitterly on the faithlessness of his former courtiers. York explains the purpose for which Richard has been summoned; formally to surrender the crown to Bolingbroke. "Here, cousin, seize the crown", cries Richard, and his fancy takes wings; the crown becomes a deep well; he and Bolingbroke are two buckets, his own deep down and full of tears, Bolingbroke's empty and mounting aloft in their air. Bolingbroke

twice interrupts; somehow Richard must be kept to the point. "I thought you had been willing to resign", he protests. Richard lashes that he is quite willing to surrender his crown but that he is still king of his grieves. Then Richard resigns the crown after his own fashion. With his own tears, he declares, he washes away the oil of consecration, and with his breath he releases all the ceremonious observances due to a king; after yielding his sceptre, his possessions and the allegiance of his subject, he hails his successor - "God save King Harry, unking'd Richard says."

Bolingbroke has brought Richard to the point, and what more remains, he leaves to his callously officious henchman, Northumberland. Since Richard's abdication must be justified to the people, a document has been prepared setting forth the misdemeanours of the fallen king. Northumberland suggests that Richard read aloud the accusations against him. When that demand is made, Richard turns upon the earl, suggesting that were Northumberland to read over his own sins, he should find the deposing of a king "Mark'd with a blot, damn'd in the book of-heaven", and to all the Pilates standing by washing their hands of him he warns that cannot wash away their sin; but he sees himself a traitor with the rest, since even a king cannot unmake an anointed king.

When Northumberland interrupts these musings by again asking Richard to read the charges against himself, he drives Richard to a sudden blaze of temper; Northumberland he declares, is nothing but a haughtly, overbearing man; as for himself, he does not know "what name to call myself" -he is now without a title, like a snowman whose identity melts away with the water-drops. Then, unexpectedly, Richard asks for a mirror, and Bolingbroke sends an attendant to fetch one. Northumberland still harasses Richard: let him read the document while the mirror is being fetched. This is too much even for Bolingbroke: "Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland".

The attendant returns, and Richard views in the glass "the face That, like the sun did make beholders wink". The mirror, he says, is full of deceit - it reveals no care - worn features, despite the many troubles besetting the holder. With a sudden gesture, Richard dashes the glass to the ground. Bolingbroke suggests that Richard's sorrows are largely of his imagination. Sarcastically Richard thanks the new King, who not only cause his grief but also teaches him how to "lament the cause".

Suddenly Richard grows tired of the performance and asks them to go. Bolingbroke tells some of the attendant nobles to take him to the Tower. As Richards leaves under guard, he bitterly remarks to his escort that they are like thieves who cleverly profit by another's misfortune. Bolingbroke himself then departs after setting the following Wednesday as his coronation day.

Left alone, the Bishop of Carlisle, the abbot of the Westminster and Aumerle go busily about the formation of a plot to supplant Bolingbroke; they accompany Westminster home to supper in order to plan a conspiracy.

Act-V

Scene i:

In London, on a street leading to the Tower, the Queen and her ladies are waiting to say farewell to the deposed King. As she watches Richard approach under guard, the Queen likens Richard's ruined greatness to the ruins of Troy and his short reign to an inn which sheltered harsh grief while triumph is now the guest of an inferior alehouse (i.e Bolingbroke).

As Richard approaches he is still apparently the absorbed spectator of his own tragedy, in which he is now all set to play the penitent. He tells her that their former irreligious way of living has cost them their earthly crowns and that he intends living a holier life in the future, while he advises her to depart hurriedly for France and shut herself up in a convent.

The Queen very naturally resents this attitude and asks her husband if Bolingbroke has not only taken away his crown but also deprived him of his courageous spirit - is the once-lion like Richard to be basely humiliated by his foes ın this fashion? But Richard is incorrigible. She must pretend that he is on his deathbed and that she is taking her last farewell of him; once arrived in her French convent, she can tell the nuns the sad story of her husband - story that will move the very logs on the hearth to quench the fire with their tears.

Richard's theme of self-pity is rudely interrupted by the arrival of Northumberland with fresh instructions from Bolingbroke. Richard is not to proceed to the Tower after all; instead he is to be taken to Pomfret Castle in Yorkshire. He adds that arrangements have been made for the Queen's immediate departure for France.

This is Richard's cue for prophecy. Retribution, he tells Northumberland, inevitably attends the success of wicked men; in the not too distant future

Northumberland's treachery will burst like a boil which comes to a head. Bolingbroke will begin to regard the Earl as a source of danger and will want to kick away the ladder with which he climbed to the throne; when this breach comes, concludes the ex-King, it will bring about the well-merited death of one, or perhaps even both of them.

Northumberland, however, is not a man to be moved by premonitions; he answers curtly and, when the Queen begs that Richard may go with her to France, he retorts that if Bolingbroke allowed Richard to leave England it would certainly display the new King's regard for her, but it would hardly be in Bolingbroke's own interests.

Thus Richard is forced to part forever from his Queen and while he is to set out for the cold north, she will return to that country from which she once set forth with all royal pomp to become his bride. Bolingbroke, Richard bitterly reflects, has not only divorced him from his crown but also from his wife. Their future sighs and groans for each other will keep their love alive.

Overcome with sorrow, Richard and his Queen kiss for the last time.

Scene ii:

Meanwhile, in his palace the Duke of York is telling his Duchess about Bolingbroke's coronation procession; Bolingbroke himself had been mounted on "a hot and fiery steed" which seemed to sense the ambitious character of the rider because it kept the course with slow and stately steps; the faces of thousands of people looking through their windows and cheering the new king seemed like the tapestries which hang from the walls of stately rooms; and so Bolingbroke passed along, bowing to acknowledge the crowd's acclamations.

But very different, continues York, was their reception of Richard, who followed in the train. Like a theatrical audience which has just applauded a popular actor and now turns its attention to a boring performer, the crowd scowled down on the deposed monarch and some threw dust and rubbish on his sacred head, which he gently shook off while tears and smiles continually struggled for mastery on his face. Yet York has accepted the altered situation and even finds God's purpose at work in this humiliation of his late sovereign. Although he feels that Richard is to be pitied, yet he concludes, they are now all sworn subjects of Bolingbroke and must be loyal to the new dynasty.

Just then Aumerle, York's son, enters and the Duchess flippantly asks him who the new favourites are at court; when Aumerle replies that he has no further interest in courtly matters, his father counsels him to accept the accomplished fact of Richard's deposition. But York, even as he delivers this advice, notices the seal of a letter dangling from his son's breast. When Aumerle refuses to show the letter to his father, the old man snatches it and discovers it to be an account of a plot hatched by Aumerle and a dozen lords, who have sworn to kill Bolingbroke at Oxford.

The angry York declares that his son is a villainous traitor and summons a servant to saddle his horse immediately for he intends to warn the new King of this treachery. The Duchess valiantly attempts to dissuade her husband; he can hardly impeach their only son; in any case, she continues they will keep Aumerle at home so that he will not be embroiled with what happens at Oxford. When York refuses to give way, the Duchess declares that his unnatural attitude must result from a belief that Aumerle is illegitimate, and she hastens to reassure him that score. But York goes off to report the plot to the king, and the Duchess implores her son to hurry and beg forgiveness from Bolingbroke before his father can get there.

Scene iii:

At Windsor Castle Bolingbroke and Northumberland's son, Percy, are discussing Henry of Monmouth, Bolingbroke's son; Indignantly the new King declares that he has not seen his son for the past three months and that it is reported that Henry roams London with dissolute companions, daily frequents taverns of ill repute and participates in criminal activities, such as robbing innocent passers-by. As the new King instructs, some of his attendants to make enquiries about the whereabouts of his son, Percy states that "some two days since I saw the prince" and that he informed him of the tournaments scheduled to be held at Oxford. Henry had coarsely replied that he would use a gift received from the commonest harlot in London as a talisman with which to defeat the stoutest challenger. Bolingbroke, however, feels that, in spite of his son's reckless actions. he shows some signs of more hopeful conduct as he grows older.

Their conversation is interrupted by Aumerle, who bursts into the royal chamber and asks permission for a private talk with Bolingbroke. As Percy and the attendant lords withdraw, Aumerle flings himself on his knees before the King

and begs his royal pardon. Bolingbroke laughingly replies that he can hardly grant his pardon for an offence the nature of which is still a complete mystery to him. Aumerle obtains Bolingbroke's permission to bolt the door while he is unfolding the tale of the plot, but at that moment York's voice can be heard demanding admission, warning the King of treason, and threatening to break down the door unless he is allowed to enter.

Hurriedly York gives Bolingbroke the treasonable letter, and while the King is reading it, Aumerle declares that though his signature appears on the document, his heart was not a party to the deed. Bolingbroke praises York for his loyalty, which he declares is great enough to wipe out the shame and dishonour of a treacherous son. But the old man has no wish for his son's pardon: "Mine honour lives when his dishonour dies". If Aumerle is pardoned the shame of his treachery will obliterate the good name of the House of York! a body can only remain healthy, concludes the Duke, if a diseased limb is cut away.

Before the King has a chance to reply, there are further knockings on the door, and the shrill voice of the Duchess can be heard begging entry for one "that never begg'd before". As Aumerle goes to open the door for his mother, Bolingbroke remarks that a serious matter has now become a case of "The Beggar and the King", York urges the King to pay no heed to a frantic old woman.

The Duchess kneels before her nephew, Bolingbroke, and declares that she will only rise when he has pardoned her "transgressing boy". She points out that if York shows no love for his own kindred, he cannot really love anyone else; in any event, she is convinced that her husband is not pleading in earnest for his son's pardon "He Prays but faintly and would be \ denied". Bolingbroke interrupts his aunt several times in an effort to stop her kneeling, but she refuses to stand up until he has pronounced a pardon for Aumerle, and even when Bolingbroke hastily declares, "I pardon him, as God shall pardon me", she makes him repeat the word, since Twice saying 'pardon' "makes one pardon strong". The Duchess is now overcome with gratitude, and says that Bolingbroke is nothing less than "A god on earth". Turning to her son, she expresses the hope that God will change his wicked nature and give him a new character.

But, although the King has forgiven Aumerle, who will, he hopes, prove loyal in the future, he is determined to punish the other plotters and he instructs his uncle to send a strong body of troops to Oxford to seize them.

Scene iv:

Meanwhile, Sir Pierce of the Exton (a court flatterer who desires to please the King at all costs) is talking with a servant in another room of the castle. He thinks the King wants Richard killed; twice Bolingbroke, looking in Exton's direction, had been heard to ask if there was no friend who would rid him of a constant source of fear, and so free the real heart once and for all from living terror. When the servant agrees that Bolingbroke did in fact speak these words Exton resolves to leave for Pomfret Castle immediately and to destroy Bolingbroke's enemy.

Scene v:

In his prison cell at Pomfret Castle Richard is thinking over his situation; in a soliloquy, he reviews the scenes in which he has played and reflects on their relation to reality. He is still dramatizing his own introverted responses to the tragedy that has befallen him and he discusses these histrionic introversions may be prolonged into the solitude in which he finds himself" (palmer). At last Richard realizes that the man who lives in imagination only has no place in the world of actual experience. Richard declares that he whiles away the time in his solitary cell by pretending himself to be various multitude of imaginary persons and creating a little world of people at different times, thereby filling his prison with a vast multitude of imaginary persons and creating a little world of his own; but mortal man no matter what his station is in life, is never really satisfied with his lot until he is confronted with death itself.

The strains of distant music break in upon his solitude, and this sets him thinking how different his story might have been if he had kept his ears open to the harmonies and rhythms of the life about him. Time has now made him its clock: his sighs show the minutes, his tears the times, and his groans the hours: and while time runs quickly on for Bolingbroke, bringing him joys, it has, made a plaything of a forlorn inmate of a prison cell. The suggestive strains of the music madden Richard: at the same time, he blesses the musician, since the notes are a symbol of love for one who is almost universally hated.

Richard's reveries are interrupted by the entrance of a man who was once a groom of the royal stables. The groom explains that after a great deal of troubles, he has obtained leave to visit his royal master. Richard is delighted, since his only other visitor is the serious jailer who brings him his food. The groom tells him

how in his coronation procession Bolingbroke rode the roan Barbary, once Richard's steed and how proudly the horse stepped. Richard has here the cue for a last exquisite fancy, but what he has to say is touched with wistful charity towards man and beast; he marvels at the fact that the horse did not stumble and break the neck of the proud rider who usurped his position in the saddle: yet he feels that he cannot blame the roan, which was created to bear a burden especially since he himself now carries the heavier burden of deposition.

The keeper now brings in food for the ex-King and tells the groom that he must not remain in the cell any longer. Richard dismisses the groom with a fond farewell and instructs the keeper to taste the dish first, as has been his habit. But the keeper refuses upon the order of Sir Pierce of Exton, who has, he says, arrived at Pomfret. Richard, losing all patience strikes the keeper, who calls for help and Exton comes in with his servants, all armed. They attack Richard who snatches an axe and kills both servants before Exton strikes him down.

As he dies Richard pronounces a curse on Exton, who has struck down a King whose sanctity on abdication can compromise before God. Exton is at once aware of his mortal sin and is overcome by remorse - he feels that this deed will be "chronicled in hell". He leaves with the body of Richard, giving his attendants instructions to bury the two slain servants.

Scene vi:

The last scene takes place at Windsor Castle, where Bolingbroke is receiving reports of the execution of the rebels from Northumberland, Fitzwater, and Henry Percy. All (including the ringleader, the Abbot of Westminster), have been executed except the Bishop of Carlisle whom Percy now brings before the king for sentence. Because of the "high sparks of honour" which Bolingbroke sees in the Bishop's character, he spares his life, but advises him to retire to some religious cloister and remain aloof from political intrigues in the future.

Exton and attendants now enter bearing Richard's coffin, but Exton's reward is a harsh speech from the King. Bolingbroke acknowledges that he had wished for Richard's death. But himself is now conscience-stricken: the murder will not only give slanderous tongues an opportunity to speak against him, but will also soil the good name of England itself.

In an effort to expiate his sin, Bolingbroke resolves to go on a crusade to the Holy Land. Sadly, he leads the funeral procession from the royal chamber.

3.11 As A Historical Play

Richard II is not at all a presentation of the life story of King Richard II or the succession of events connected with his coronation and deposition. It is on the other hand, a regular, dramatic expression of Shakespeare's conception, of historical tragedy, of the duties and responsibilities as of the perils of Kingship. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare raises the question of inheritance of the crown, the justification of kingship against misrule or the usurpation of the throne by anybody else who proves to be a more competent ruler than the ruling king who is a misfit fôr various reasons. Richard is an anointed king who is ruining his country and Bolingbroke is a treasonous usurper who is an efficient ruler. *Richard II* is history shaped into a tragedy. Shakespeare does not take up the entire reign of Richard but only the last two years of his reign which he uses for creating a drama. In this attempt he introduces certain dramatic elements into history which is not violated or mutilated but which is converted into a great spectacle of a conflict between two great personalities, Richard and Bolingbroke.

While considering the question of deviation from history in the material of *Richard II,* we should not forget that a historical drama is not mere history but it is a work of art, and as such, the historical material has got to be changed wherever it is necessary to achieve some unity of artistic effect. Shakespeare has introduced certain changes in characterisation as well as in the relation of facts and incidents.

The chief source from which Shakespeare has borrowed the story of *Richard II* is Holinshed's *Chronicles of England Scotland and Ireland.* The scholars suppose that Shakespeare has possibly used the second edition of the Chronicles because the omen of the withering of the bay-trees is not mentioned in the first edition. There are a few indications that Shakespeare has consulted a few other sources also. For example, in Holinshed, there is no mention of Bolingbroke going to the Holy land which Shakespeare might have borrowed from Stowles *Annals*. In Holinshed, we find that Bishop Carlisle after his arrest is lodged in the Abbey of Saint Albans but in *Richard II* we find more correct account namely that the Bishop of Carlisle is committed to the custody to the Abbot of Westminster. We do not find in Holinshed's *Chronicles* any reference to Richard's formal transfer of the crown to Bolingbroke which we find in Shakespeare's play. It is supposed that this transfer of crown might have been borrowed from a passage in

Berner's translation of Froissart. There is also great similarity between Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* and *Richard II*. The most striking similarity is between the two abdication scenes.

As far as the change in characterisation is concerned, the character of the Queen is a great deviation from history. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare paints the Queen as a grown-up woman, but in history at the time of action of the play, the Queen was a girl of twelve years only. The Queen's love and pity for the king not only adds pathos to the atmosphere but also brings out the sweeter and gentler aspect of the King's character. It is because of the Queen's meeting with the King and also because of her leave-taking that we come to know how loving, gentle and kind the king is. The Queen's presence in the drama, her association with the king however short and momentary, lends a peculiar charm to the character and personality of the king: his fall from the throne assumes a peculiar pathetic halo which converts his public humiliation and disgrace from a disaster into a tragedy. Shakespeare has changed also the character of the Duchess of York, mother of Aumerle. In history the Duchess is the step mother of Aumerle and also younger in age than she is represented in the play. Shakespeare has introduced this change in the character of the Duchess of York only to make her sufficiently powerful in her appeal to Bolingbroke for pardoning the criminal conspiracy of Aumerle and also to resist the wild opposition of her husband against her appeal on behalf of her son.

Check Your Progress Questions

6.There is a similarity between *Richard II* and Marlow's ____

7.In the character of ____, there is a great deviation from history

8.Shakespeare painted ____ as a man of great wisdom, a valiant fighter, a great patriot, shrewd diplomat

Then again, John of Gaunt has been painted by Shakespeare as a man of great wisdom, a valiant fighter, a great patriot, shrewd diplomat and also an honest critic and chastiser of Richard's follies and vices; but in history he is known as an ambitious selfish man, and unpopular personality whose palace or mansion was burnt by the people who passed their decree that England must not have a king with the prefix 'John' to his name. Gaunt in history is further shown to be an unsuccessful soldier and also as continually plotting against the king. Shakespeare's Gaunt is a great patriot and a nationalist who loves England, her kings and her people and who also feels proud of their glories. The character of Gaunt as painted by Shakespeare is necessary from the dramatic point of view to bring out a contrast between Gaunt and York and also to chastise the erring king although Richard is incorrigible. The rude and unpopular Mowbray of history has been converted by Shakespeare as a spirit of chivalry, patriotism and Christianity.

This is to bring about the striking contrast between the unkind Richard and the self-sacrificing Mowbray who ill-deserves his sentence of life-long banishment.

There are many deviations in the play from historical facts and incidents. The artist tries to dramatize history and to bring about the impression of a unity of action from the scattered facts and figures of history only through certain deviations.

Shakespeare omits in *Richard II* the role of Sir John Bushie who should have asked Mowbray and Bolingbroke to appear before the king and lay their charges against each other. In the play, it is the king who pronounces the sentence of exile whereas in history it is Bushie, the king's secretary who reads out the sentence. Immediately after the pronouncement of the sentence the king reduces the term of exile of Bolingbroke by four years but in history there is a gap of a few weeks between the pronouncement of the sentence and the reduction of the term of exile.

In the play, there is practically no interval of time in between Bolingbroke's banishment, Gaunt's death and Richard's expedition to Ireland but in history there are gaps in between each of the incidents.

The Duchess of Glouchester dies before the return of Bolingbroke from his exile in Shakespeare's play. But in history she dies much later than Bolingbroke's return to England. Bolingbroke, in the play, meets Richard in Flint castle. But History tells us that Bolingbroke already captured Flint castle and Richard is held a prisoner there. Similarly Richard and Bolingbroke are shown as entering London on the same day unlike Holinshed's *Chronicle*, where they are mentioned as entering London on successive days. The three incidents in the play namely, the impeachment of Aumerle, Richard's abdication and the protest of Carlisle are all made to occur together in the same parliament; in history they do not occur like this, nor does the king attend any such parliament.

John of Gaunt, the Duke of York and Mowbray are pictured older than they are in history; where Percy is shown two years younger than Bolingbroke. Mention is made of Bolingbroke's son as quite a young man in the play but in history he is hardly a boy of twelve.

There are many incidents in the play which are Shakespeare's own inventions such as, the scene between John of Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester; all incidents connected with the Queen in the play such as her talk

Check Your Progress Questions

9.In history, Mowbray was ___ but Shakespeare converted him as a spirit of chivalry, patriotism, christianity

with the gardener, her meeting with Richard in London street, the death - scene of John of Gaunt, and the deposition scene of Richard. The gardener and his servant, as well as the groom are all fictitious characters which find no place in Holinshed's *Chronicle*.

3.12 The character of King Richard II

In *Macbeth*, Malcolm gives an impartial list of 'the king - becoming graces;" we may guess that Shakespeare believed that a king should possess such qualities, as justice, verity, temperance, stableness, bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness, devotion, patience, courage, and fortitude.

Richard II was not a notable villain like Richard III; Holinshed says that if in Richard II there were any offence, it ought rather to be imputed to the frailty of wanton youth, than to the malice of his heart. We can clearly see that Richard's character, matched against Malcolm's list, falls short of kingly stature.

Shakespeare opens the play with Richard as a judge, endeavouring to calm two quarreling nobles. He fails to pacify them. He lets them settle the matter, in true medieval fashion by shedding each other's blood. But at the last moment the king stops the duel. The council condemnns both the nobles to exile. Again, upon a whim he reduces the term of exile at Bolingbroke by four years. So, neither justice not temperance nor stableness is seen in Richard's dealing with the nobles.

Richard shows neither mercy nor devotion in his behaviour towards his uncle John of Gaunt. He has utterly no concern for his dying uncle. Again as soon as his uncle dies Richard seizes all his property for immediate use in the Irish wars. He refuses to listen to York, who sees clearly that this is a suicidal act bound to infuriate not only Gaunt's heir, Bolingbroke, but also the other nobles. 'We were not born to sue but to command' says Richard, 'infused with self and vain concert'. Far from being temperate, his extravagance knows no bound. His actions are 'rash fierce blaze of riot'. 'York bemoans Richard's absorption in 'vanity' and in 'reports of fashion in proud Italy'. Northumberland declares that though Richard would not fight, 'more hath he spent in peace than they (his ancestors) in wars'. Both nobles and commons resent his heavy taxation, Even the gardener talks of 'the wasteful king and of his waste of idle hours'. Being notably handsome and surrounded by flatterers, Richard feels he need not be lowly. Richard himself admits, in a gross understatement that,

Our coffers with too great a court

And liberel largess are grown somewhat light (I,iv,43)

He later on recalls pathetically that he kept 'ten thousand men', under his household roof. His talk of jewels .... gorgeous palaces ..... gay apparel ..... figured goblets ..... emphasizes his luxurious way of living.

Richard is shown as surrounded by a troup of parasites who prey on the kingdom. They stop his ears with flatteries and make him incapable of hearing a word of blame even from the lips of his dying uncle. The ruin of the impoverished land, the dangers to private property, a revolt in Ireland, the arming of the nobles in self defence - all these indicate the germinating seed of revolution which the misled king has scattered.

Richard is constantly withdrawing from reality to live in a false world of his own creation. Critics have often drawn close comparisons between Hamlet and Richard. Both are alike in their nervous sensitivity, their preoccupation with things imagined rather than things experienced, habit of characterizing the issues presented to them, their constant outpouring of heart and mind in words and their changes of mood and temper. But Richard is much more egocentric than Hamlet. He is interested only in himself and the figure he cuts in a world of his own contriving, and nothing has interest or significance but what concerns himself. When Richard hears that his friends Bushy, Bagot and Green have not, as he fears, betrayed him, but have been executed by Bolingbroke, he utters no word of sorrow or regret for them, bursts into a long speech on his own troubles, and those of all kings. Richard describes himself as he would wish to appear, not as he is. He speaks, for instance, of "the unstopping firmness of my upright soul", and declares 'we were not born to sue, but to command' when it is clear that he is behaving in a totally ineffective way, and these phrases are ironically paradoxical.

Even when parting from his Queen, Richard is self absorbed. The Queen finds him,

Both in shape and mind

Transform'd and weak'ned (V,i 26)

But when she begs him to act like the 'lion', the king of beasts, Richard picks up her phrase but alters the emphasis; he does not accept her rebuke but blames others, saying that he has been

A King of beasts, indeed! if aught but beasts.

I had been still a happy king of men,... (V, i, 35)

He does not comfort his wife but, completely self-centred, finds some consolations in bidding her

Tell thou the lamentable tale of me
And send the hearers weeping to their beds;
....
Weep the fire out;
And some will mourn in ashes, some coal- black,
For the deposing of a rightful king.

The exquisite cadence, the dying fall move the hearers. Though Richard has no real feelings for anyone but himself, he is able to hold the hearts of those with whom he enters into personal relations such as the Queen, the young nobles like Aumerle and the groom who gets leave to see him in prison.

Sometimes it appears that the only thing important to Richard is that he should be at the centre of every scene! he must cause a sensation, even to his own disadvantage. When Richard throws down his warder just as the champions are levelling their lanches, he establishes his self-dramatizing character and that he is always aware of the picture which he presents; he seems more interested in creating a momentary effect than in considering the total situation or the probable results of his melodramatic actions. Mowbray's son emphasizes when long afterwards, he says that,

When the King did throw his warder down,
His own life hung upon the staff he threw;

(*Henry IV* Part II, iv, i. 125)

We see that Richard gloats over Bolingbroke's banishment, without any thought of the future.

From Flint castle at one moment he defies Bolingbroke and Northumberland, forecasting 'bleeding war'; in his next speech he welcomes his 'noble cousin'. A few minutes later he is - unasked offering to submit to be deposed and lose the name of king! He draws a moving picture of his exchanging jewels, palace, figures goblets and gay apparel for 'a set of beads' 'a hermitage' We are impelled to sympathize and to pity him, but as he goes on:

A little, little grave, an obscure grave (III, iii, 154)

We must surely feel that Richard is now positively enjoying himself, consumed with self-pity. Richard pines on the agony and condemns himself out of his own mouth.

When Richard is summoned to Westminster Hall to renounce the crown, it is obvious that Bolingbroke wishes to get the embarrassing scene over as quickly as possible. He speaks rarely, in single lines. Richard addresses him as 'silent king'. When Richard says:

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown;
Here cousin; - (IV i, 181)

Bolingbroke imagines that he is, in fact, expected to the take crown. But this Richard's opportunity to hold the centre of the stage is a unique scene, and he is determined to make the utmost of it. He and Bolingbroke hold the crown between them, while Richard compares it to a well, within which two buckets pass one another.

That bucket down and full of tears, am I.
Drinking my griefs while you mount up on high. (IV i, 188)

We feel the embarrassment and annoyance of the practical man;
Bolingbroke, in his curt speeches:

I thought you had been willing to resign (IV, i, 190) elaborates and puns. Bolingbroke loses patience.

A˜e you contented to resign the crown? (IV, i, 200). Richard first yields it, then snatches it back, still playing with words:

Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be (IV i. 201).
He demands everyone's attention.
Now mark me, how I will undo myself (IV, i, 203).

'undo' carries both meanings, to ruin, and to disrobe, for now Richard creates a solemn and beautiful ceremony of de-cornation.

Northumberland's cruelty, in urging him to read out a list of his crimes, rouses Richard to an extreme of misery; he sees himself as Christ, delivered to his sour cross! But he is not even yet content to end the scene.

An if my word be sterling yet in England,
Let it command a mirror hither straight,
That it may show me what a face I have,
Since it is bankrupt of his majesty, (IV, i. 264)

Bolingbroke's abrupt, commonplace, single line of reply:

Go, some of you, and fetch a looking glass (IV, i, 268) is like a whipcrack. But perhaps even Bolingbroke is bemused by Richard's next speech, as he gazes into the glass and mourns his departed glory".

Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face, that faced so many follies,
And was atlast out-faced by Bolingbroke? (IV, 1,281)

The court, and the audience, are hushed into attentive silence, contemplating the 'brittle' nature of all wordly success that startled and shocked as Richard hurls the glass to the ground and shatters it.

How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face. (IV, i, 291)

Bolingbroke has enough of this posturing, and bursts out impatiently:

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed
The shadow of your face (IV,i,293)

Richard, unabashed simply picks up the phrase, elaborates, it and thanks Bolingbroke for teaching him the way how to lament.

Bolingbroke and Richard are of entirely different temperaments - that of practical and artistic temperament. While Bolingbroke is a man of duel, Richard is essentially a man of dreams and fancies. Richard uses words not only like Hamlet to impact his heart, but also to display his heart to others, He is abundantly and overwhelmingly eloquent; Bolingbroke by contrast seems laconic; when Richard returns from Ireland to a kingdom at war, he should, as a king, act with 'stableness .... patience, courage, fortitude' But he seems concerned only to indulge in his emotions; he 'plays fondly' with his fancies, even though he realizes that his speech seems a 'senseless conjuration' to his lord's he is urged to rally forces. But Richard speaks from a different world of his own personifying himself as the sun and declaring his confidence in his ally, God. A few lines later he plunges into despair and accepts defeat; but when Aumerle urges Richard to remember who he is, the king swings up again, like an actor remembering his part.

I had forgot myself, am I not king?
...... are we not high?

High be our thoughts. (Act III, Sc.ii, 83-85)

Yet almost immediately, he swings down; "*Cry woè destruction, ruin and decay*". However unsatisfactory he is as a king, yet as professor Walter Raleigh said, "It is difficult to condemn Richard without taking sides against poetry!"

Poet, actor, dreamer passive spectator - all these qualities unavoidably lead him to revel in imagery whenever he speaks. Instead of deciding, he interprets the situation by means of elaborate similes; instead of turning to action, he prefers to reflect upon his own state. He becomes an interested spectator of his own ruin, dressing it out 'with illuminating phrases and exquisite images... '

Nineteenth - century critics condemned him on moral grounds; Dowden thought him "deficient in all that is sterling and real in manhood". "Furnivall called him 'degenerate' and 'a mere royal sham'. Walter Pater and Yeats defended Richard, not as a king, nor a man but as an equisite poet. Richard, quick, bright, gay, sensitive, is a monstrous villain. The chronicler Hall shows that "unprofitable counsellors were his confusion and final perdition". Lack of judgement was one of his gravest faults, for he was unable to judge the worth of a man or the importance of a situation. His only real offence seems to be his complicity in the murder of his uncle Gloucester, and his only crime the confiscation of Bolingbroke's inheritance. Richard's faults as king were more of omission than of commission. To sum up, Richard is 'feeling combined with energy'. The conclusion we might perhaps draw from the play is that weakness forgivable in a subject may be unforgivable in a king. Auden wrote 450 years later: "A cruel, even an unjust king, who is strong, is preferable to the most saintly weak king because men will behave unjustly if they discover that they can with impunity: tyranny, the injustice of one, is less unjust than anarchy, the injustice of many"

Richard, like King Lear and Timon had to acquire self-knowledge the hard way, through bitter suffering. But Richard does not have Lear's stature. He can more aptly be compared to Henry VI, another unsatisfactory king who was weak rather than wicked, and who lost his throne because he was too weak to rule his kingdom and his nobles. Somehow we are made to feel that Richard lacks the intelligence or strength to reach the complete understanding of himself. It was only after ten years Shakespeare drew a king who puffed up with age considered himself almost almighty and made of different stuff from those about him. But ultimately he realises -that, stripped of ceremony he was mere man, and

unaccommodated man is no more but a poor "bare forked animal". Such insights of Lear could not be expected of Richard.

3.13 Character of Bolingbroke

Richard II has been called 'a conspirator's hand book' - a study of how a man may successfully usurp a high position. The play is not merely a contrast of power, a fierce struggle of an enraged usurper against a weak though lawful king. Shakespeare is concerned with more than this mere outward contrast; he deals with a fundamental opposition between two different principles. Shakespeare, through the whole handling of the plot, wanted to pose a problem and a tragic issue involved in the plot. The whole play reveals Shakespeare's attitude towards kingship, his profound interpretation of the "divine right of kings" and as a corollary of the "people's right to the good and just king". The interaction of these two fundamental ideas imparts to each scene in the play a rich and subtle meaning.

In contrast to Richard, Bolingbroke presents the incarnation of efficiency. He has few personal graces, and the courtesy which wins him popularity is a matter of deliberate attitude, not of instinct. Unlike Richard who talks elaborately when he should act, Bolingbroke acts with very few words; what little he speaks, he speaks carefully with definite practical objective. He makes best use of time and situation and takes every step with machine like precision towards his pre-determined end. In the conflict with Richard efficiency enjoys a complete triumph over imagination. Thus Bolingbroke is obviously the moving and controlling spirit of the drama. He initiates the action, shapes its whole course, and ties up all its threads at the close. He builds both his ambition and the expectation on his knowledge of Richard's character and his own political insight.

Bolingbroke displays characteristics of a king by nature and inheritance. Bolingbroke from the beginning acts in such a way that the people are used to seeing kingly acts emanating from him. With manly dignity and composure he endures the misfortune of banishment. He has already won the sympathy of people. He boldly defies the sentence and returns to the country to seek immediate redressal for Richard's foolish confiscation. Now the people and the nobles too feel the injustice done to him. They are prepared to support his cause. At Flint castle, when Richard is completely helpless and powerless, the powerful

Bolingbroke shows all respect for the king and kneels before him. Finally in the deposition scene he stops Northumberland from tormenting Richard any further.

In dealing with his enemies he acts with almost sympathy, or is it tact? He pardons the arrested early; Aumerle is treated with humane and kindly motives while other conspirators are put to death. Though Bolingbroke acts vigorously (in IV and V Acts) he is very prudent and this makes a sharp contrast to Richard's violent tyranninzing (in the I and II Acts).

Shakespeare leaves us in some doubts regarding Bolingbroke's usurpation; was it predetermined and preplanned? or was it as Samuel Daniel maintained in his *History of the Civil Wars* (1599) that Bolingbroke who had no thought so high to climb...

Was with occasion thrust into the crime.

There are ample evidences in this play and *Henry IV* (parts 1 and 2) to prove both the arguments.

Bolingbroke makes a bold entry into the country when he is exiled. All the other nobles flatter him. But Bolingbroke never makes a traitrous remark. He makes a simple statement of his position when greeted as 'my Lord of Hereford'. His response is:

My Lord, my answer is to - 'Lancaster',

York had already warned Richard that seizing Bolingbroke's property would lead to fatal consequences. Bolingbroke also makes the same point:

As I was banished, I was banished Hereford,

But as I come, I come for Lancaster .....

Northumberland confirms this:

The noble duke hath sworn his coming is

But for his own;

We all have strongly sworn to give him aid (11,2,48) The nobles are prepared to help the cause of one of them for their own sake.

Bolingbroke specifically states that he will not oppose the heaven's will and his first requests to Richard, at Flint Castle are not altogether unreasonable. He says he is simply:

hither come

Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,

Provided that my banishment repealed

And lands restored again be freely granted: (Act III, iii, 38)

But if refused, threatens civil war; Richard at once agrees to accomplish 'all the number of his fair demands'. The affair seems reasonably settled. Northumberland comes back, presumably to bring Bolingbroke's agreement and submission. But, before Northumberland can give any message at all, Richard surrenders far more than was even asked and bases himself. Bolingbroke seems staggered:

What says his majesty? (Act III, iii,184)

He humbly kneels. Richard will have none of this:

Up cousin up (Act III, iii,194)

Now quickly Bolingbroke must have calculated, something more than 'I come but for mine own'. He must have included, by this time the crown Richard is offering him in the list of mine own'.

In the later plays also we find evidences to support the argument that Richard's overthrow was not pre - planned. Henry IV, looking back explains that,

Necessity so bowed the state

That I and greatness were compelled to kiss (*Henry IV part2*, III, I, 73)

The nobles who had helped him to the throne were not at all clear how it had happened. Worcester declares that it was "this-swarm of fair advantages" that emboldened Bolingbroke to forget his oath.

Richard had suspicion from the beginning of his cousin's working towards 'that end', i.e, winning the crown. In the earlier part of the play Richard has bitter complaints of his cousin's "courtship to the common people" and how "he did seem to dive into their hearts". Richard also has emphasized in the beginning the fact that Bolingbroke is 'but my father's brother's son and not "my brother - my kingdom's heir". Before the trial of arms Richard almost encourages Mowbray to accuse Bolingbroke.

Free speech and fearless I to thee allow; (I, i, 23) Bolingbroke is merely one among the many nobles. So what authority does he have to condemn Bushy and Green and command Northumberland to execute them? Later he is very anxious to justify his execution. He is also very anxious that Richard should publicly resign his crown.

So we shall proceed

Without suspicions (IV, i, 156)

Bolingbroke is shown as a strong man with natural qualities of a leader. So Northumberland obeys. The first words Bolingbroke speaks to Richard in the play are loaded with dramatic irony:

Many years of happy days befall

My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege! (I,i,20)

Richard as long as alive, is Bolingbroke's living fear. Exton hopes to free Bolingbroke from this fear but creates a deep feeling of guilt and sacrifice which he, as king Henry IV, carries with him till his death. The dying King Henry IV regrets:

By what bypaths and indirect crooked ways

I met this crown..................

How I came by the crown, O God forgive!

(*Henry IV*, Part 2. 1 V, 5, 183,217)

Whatever be Bolingbroke's intentions, the Elizabethans could never have been convinced by Bolingbroke's deeds. For rebellion, to the Elizabethans, could never be justified; it was always wicked. Even if the rebellion was inevitable, by the misdeeds of the King, the rebells and the rebellion was more sinful. So Shakespeare shows us that Bolingbroke is neither happy nor content. Even before the formal abdication we see the quarrelling lords who seem not easy to control. By the end of the abdication scene the clergy are not willing to submit to the new king Henry IV. The regicide is anxious to placate the King of kings by going on a pilgrimage. But he is always prevented because his own example has shown him that rebellion could be successful, and in his turn he is faced with rebellious nobles. Though he suppresses the first rebels, the problem recurs throughout his reign. He is also plagued by his 'unthrifty son'. The very nobles who had backed Bolingbroke in overthrowing Richard now realise the mistake. The throne after all is Richard's divine inheritance. Hotspur in *Henry IV,* Part I, looking back compares 'Richard, that sweet lovely rose to this thorn this canker' (meaning Bolingbroke). "Richard, boasting and his poetry have made us feel something of the awe he himself associates with the idea of monarchy, and we cannot feel that Bolingbroke's reasons for seizing the throne - his greater efficiency, authority and cleverness are justifications".

3.14 Imagery in *Richard II*

Richard II is distinguished from most of Shakespeare's other plays for its peculiar unity of tone. This induces Walter Pater to describe the play's dramatic form as approaching "something like the unity of a lyrical ballad, a lyric, a song, a single strain of music". Richard's own speeches have a kind of lyric intensity. The other characters use a wide mixture of styles, most of the verse seems midway between the stiff, endstopped, blankverse and couplets of *Love's Labour's Lost*: or the *Comedy of Errors* and the remarkable freedom - whole paragraph at a breath - of the blank verse of the later tragedies. Shakespeare in *Richard II* writes in blank verse or rhyming couplets with equal facility. But the quality varies surprisingly. On the Elizabethan stage, with neither curtain nor changeable lighting the end of a scene was usually emphasized by a rhyming couplet.

Desolate, desolate will I hence and die:
The last leave of thee takes my weeping eye. (I,ii; 73)

York's misery and alarm and his uncertainty when required to choose between Richard and Bolingbroke, are expressed in regular broken lines - implying speech bursting out distractedly and he stammers on to a concluding couplet which sums up the situation:

But time will not permit· all is uneven,
And everything is left at six and seven (Act II, Sc.ii, 122-123)

Shakespeare at this time, seems to have a delight in poetic ornament for its own sake. So we find elaboration of expression very different from the highly compressed poetic drama of his later writing. When Richard compares himself to the sun, he explains the comparison in sixteen lines (III, ii, 36-52) whereas Henry V makes the same comparison in three allusive lines:

But I will rise there with so full a glory
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,
Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us. (*Henry V*,I,2:279)

Without mentioning the word Sun, when Richard is reduced to 'nothing' (V.v.38) Shakespeare expounds the paradox with repetition and internal rhyme:

But Whate'er I be,
Nor I nor any man that but man is
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
With being nothing. (V, 5, 38)

Check Your Progress Questions

10 ___ has been called a conspirator's hand book

11 ____ is the controlling spirit of the drama

12.The Elizabethans could never have been convinced by ____'s deeds

How much more compressed and intense are Timons words:

My long sickness

Of health and living now begins to mend.

And nothing brings me all things. (*Timon of Athens* V, 1,191)

Relentless time occupies Richard for nineteen lines (V,5, 42-60) and Macbeth for five (*Macbeth* V,5,18 - 22). But Shakespeare's poetic abundance has a peculiar charm of its own and it is Richard's poetry, which makes the reader or the audience sympathize with him. Most Elizabethan writers enjoyed playing games with words; In *Richard II*, we may note particularly Shakespeare's use of repetition of the same word, punning and alliteration (repetition of the same letter). The use of these adds grace to the passages.

Many of Shakespeare's puns in this play are more word-singles, as when Percy tenders, his 'tender' service (II,3,41-42), when Richard says "Too well, too well thou tell'st a tale so ill"(III,2,121), or Richard and Gaunt use 'ill' four times in three lines (Act II, Sc.i, 92-94).

Sometimes puns give some slight enlargement of an idea as when Northumberland talks of "civil and uncivil arms" (Act III, Sc.iii, 102). Gaunt calls Bolingbroke's journey into exile a "travel", a travail or toil (I,3,262), and the 'inspired' Gaunt in 'expiring' is both breathing out his prophecies and dying (II,1,31-32).

The dying John of Gaunt does indeed pun so repeatedly on his name that Richard protests:

Can sick men play so nicely with their names? (II. 1, 84)

And Gaunt replies,

No, misery makes sport to mock itself.

But soon Richard is following suit and addressing his uncle as a "lean-witted fool" (Act III, Sc.i, 115)

Shakespeare also uses puns to serve better purpose: to add richness and ambiguity. The exiled Bolingbroke is a 'journeyman' to grief - both a traveller and an apprentice (I,3,274);

Richard is 'possessed' of his kingdom, and also 'possessed' in the sense of mad (II,1,07-8). There is real significance in Bolingbroke's pun on rain-regin (III,3,59) in Richard's complaint that he is 'subjected' both brought low and made a mere subject (III,2, 176), in his remembrance of the "favours", the countenances

and the good will, of his faithless court (IV, 1,168) and in his resolve, at his deposition to 'undo', that is, simultaneously to disrobe and to ruin himself (IV.1 ,203).

Characters aptly repeat one another's words; an expressive use of repetition is:

Gaunt: Convey me to my bed, then to my grave:
Love they to live that love and honour have.
(Exit)
Richard: And let them die that age and sullers have
For both hast thou, and both become the grave (Act II, Scene I, 137 - 140)

Further, they may add emphasis by punning:

Bolingbroke: Mistake not, uncle, further, you should.
York: Take not, good cousin, further than you should.
Lest you mis-take (III,3,15)

Repetition and punning seem mere formal alliteration devices as when used:

That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword,
That it shall render vengeance and revenge
Till thou the lie-giver, and that lie, do lie
In earth. (IV, 1,66)

But repetition most meaningfully reinforces Gaunt's meaningfully where he hammers on 'world', 'land' 'shame' and 'law' ; and here it is Richard who speaks; the devices are not notices as extraneous ornament, for they are integrated into the poetry. For instance the lines

In the base court? base court where kings grow base,
To come at traitors' calls and do them grace,
In the base court? come down? Down court! down, King!
(Act III, Sc.iii, 180)

appear as 'natural' dramatic vehemence.

Again, Richard's mournful line,

A king, woe's slave shall kingly woe obey. (Act III, Sc.ii, 210)

With its soft we and s's and long'o's is perfectly expressive. So are the spitting 'b' when Bolingbroke is recalling his exile (III, 1, 21)

When Richard gazes into the mirror and apostrophizes his own face, it is not only the stately pace of the verse and the real significance of the questions that move the hearers; it is the insistent repetition of the word 'face' with the puns on

'faced' and 'out-faced', the repetition of the same form of question, the repetition in the final couplet:

A brittle glory shineth in this face:
As brittle as the glory is the face; (IV, 1, 287).

which give the speech its hypnotic and ritualistic tone. This effect of 'conjuration' (III, 2, 23) is a characteristic feature of Richard's speeches. This is very much true of Richards's deposition speech:

I give this heavy weight from off my head
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart:
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths (V, 1, 204)

The play *Richard II* is about fall of one prince and the rise of another. But it was not Shakespeare's chief aim to show how the weak king must, in the end, yield to the greater power of the usurper; he rather wanted to make clear through his whole handling of the plot that a problem and a tragic issue are involved. The whole play reveals Shakespeare's attitude towards kingship his profound interpretation of the "divine right of kings" and, as a corollary, of "the people's right to the good and just king". The wealth of the imagery in *Richard II* results from this peculiar reflective mood pervading the whole play for it is the nature of imagery to express and suggest something more than the bare details of the situation. Imagery is capable of adding a further meaning to the immediate meaning. It may reveal and underline the symbolic import of what is happening on the stage. In this play Shakespeare uses 'iterative' images that is, groups of connected and repetitive images. Miss Caroline F.E Spurgeon has pointed out how in *Antony and Cleopatra* the cosmic grandeur of the theme is constantly emphasized by the repetition of the word *world.* In a similar manner the symbolism of *Richard II* is dominated by the related words *earth land* and *ground.* These words superficially seem roughly synonymous but they have many intellectual ramifications which become more and more meaningful as the play progresses and the words are used first for one thing and then for another. 'Earth' is the symbol of the English nation. It sums up all the feeling inherent in the sense

of pride in nation; of jealousy when the country is threatened by foreign invasion of bitter anger when its health has been destroyed by mismanagement or greed John of Gaunt calls England in his famous speech;

"This earth of majesty"

".... ....This blessed plot, this earth, this realm this

England (Act II, Sc.i, 41-50)

And a few lines later, he says,

"this land of such dear souls, this dear dear land" (Act II scene i, 57)

Having once appeared, so early in the play, in such lustrous context, the words *earth* and *land*, forever after, are more meaningful and more powerful. Thus Richard's elaborate speech upon his arrival in Wales undoubtedly gains in emotional splendour as well as dramatic irony:

As a long parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth
And do thee favours with my royal hands (Act III, Sc.ii, 8 – 11)

Richard and John of Gaunt between them make the English earth the chief verbal theme of the play. To Richard, ownership of the land is the most tangible and positive symbol of his rightful kingship. He bids Northumberland tell Bolingbroke that "every stride he makes upon my land is dangerous treason (III,iii,92-93) As he lies dying from the stroke of Exton's sword his last thought is for his land: "Exton, thy fierce hand / Hath with the king's blood stained the King's own land" (V, v, 110-111) It is only natural then, that 'land' should be the key word in the discussion of England's sorry condition. Symbol of Englishmen's nationalistic pride and of the wealth of the king, it becomes symbol also of Englishmen's shame and King's disgrace.

Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this land by lease;
But for thy world enjoying but this land,
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?
Landlord of England art thou now, not king. (II,1,109-113)

Northumberland's sad allusion to "this declining land" (II,i,240) York's to "this woeful land" (II, ii,99) and Richard's to "this revolting land" (III, iii 163) carry on this motif.

'Earth is also a familiar symbol of the vanity of human life and of what ın the middle ages, was a fascinating illustration of that vanity - the fall of kings. Richard, luxuriating in self-pity, often remembers it; to earth he will return. Salisbury also comments:

Ah, Richard with the eyes of heavy mind

I see thy glory like a shooting star

Fall to the base earth from the firmament (Act II, scene IV, 18 - 20)

The earth, Richard knows, is accustomed to receive the knees of courtiers. He tells Bolingbroke after he has given away his kingdom for the sheer joy of listening to himself do so.

Fair coursin, you debase your princely knee

To make the base earth proud with kissing it (Act III, Sc.iii, 190-191)

The idea of the ground as the resting place for suppliant knees and therefore the antithesis of kingly elevation, is repeated thrice in the two scenes dealing with Aumerle's conspiracy. By the beginning of III Act *earth* has lost its earlier joyful connotation to Richard and no amount of woe can cool his feverish imagination. After death, earth receives its own: and in *Richard II* the common notion of the grave has new meaning, because the ubiquitous symbol of earth embraces it too:

"Lets' talk of graves of worms, and epitaphs:

Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow on the boscm of the earth"

The same association occurs in the speeches of the other characters. Surrey casting his gaze at Fizwater's feet, envisions his father's skull lying quietly in earth (IV i, 66-69): a moment or two later the Bishop of Carlisle brings news that the banished Mowbray, having fought for Jesus Christ in glorious Christian field, "at Venice gave His body to that pleasant country's earth" (iv, i, 97-8): in the same scene Richard, having handed over his crown to the usurper, exclaims,

Long may'st thou live in Richard's seat ito sit.

And soon lie Richard in an earthy pit! (Act IV. Sc.i, 218-219)

In the early histories imagery arose out of certain situations or it helped to emphasize some repeatedly occurring themes. In *Richard II*, imagery becomes the characteristic manner of expression of the chief character. This is the first instance of Shakespeare's habitual manner of endowing his heroes with unusual

imagination and poetic gift. Similes and metaphors that Richard uses, amply illustrate the king's nature and temperament. In full consciousness of his kingly dignity, the king frequently compares himself with the sun. Upon his return from Ireland to England he describes himself as the rising sun. In the next scene he calls himself "glistering Phaeton"; in the famous abdication scene, when a mirror is handed to him on his request he asks: "Was this the face that, like the sun, did make beholders wink?" (IV, i, 284). But the other characters too, make use of this sun image. To Bolingbroke Richard seems 'the blushing discontented sun' (III,iii,63). When the Welsh captain enumerates manifold fore bodings, at the end of the Second Act, "These signs forerun the death or fall of kings", Salisbury adds, "Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west" (II, iv.21). But curiously enough, Richard himself feels in the end that he is no longer "the sun", he speaks of the sun of Bolingbroke, before which he, "a mockery king of snow", should like to melt (IV,i,260).

Miss Caroline Spurgeon has adequately emphasized the importance of the image of 'untended garden' in the history plays. As she says the image reaches its climax in *Richard II*, particularly in the allegorical scene of the Queen's garden. In Shakespeare's imagination misdeeds of Richard and his followers constitute an overwhelming indignity to the precious English earth which has been a see - walled garden in happier days "Thus the play is filled with reference to ripeness and the seasons, to planting and cropping and plucking, reaping, to furrows and flowing, and caterpillars and withered bay trees and thorns and flowers". The gardener, in the garden scene within the walls of his little plot of land is a king. The gardener's opening words are highly symbolic;

Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricokts,
Which, like unruly children, make their sire
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.

The apricots have grown inflated overweening in the sun of the royal favour. The oppression of their weight is used with a political as well as physical meaning. Unless restrained, apricots would ruin the parent-plant. Likewise unruly children would upset the proper relation between parent and offspring, and offend against the great principle of order. The rest of the gardener's speech would bear out this interpretation:

Go thou, and like an executioner

Cut of the heads of too fast growing sprays,
That look too lofty in our common wealth,
All most be even in out government.
You thus emplop,d' I will go root away
The noisome weeds, which without profit suck.
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers. (Act III, Sc., IV, 29-39)

In fact, the scene turns out to be an elaborate political allegory, with the Earl of Wilshire, Bushy, and Green standing for the noxious weeds which Richard, the bad gardener, allowed to flourish and which Henry, the new gardener, has rooted up. The Queen at the end of the scene confirms the gardener's legal and moral function by calling him "old Adam's likeness", but curses him for his ill news about Richard and Bolingbroke. The intensively symbolic character of the scene is confirmed when the gardener at the end proposes to plant a bank with rue where the queen let fall her tears, as a memorial.

Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen
In the remembrance of a weeping queen. (Act III, Sc. IV, 106 - 107)

Shakespeare achieves the splendid horror in *Macbeth*' by his repeated allusion to blood. But the word 'blood' and its related words 'bloody' and 'bleed' occur much less frequently in *Macbeth* than it does in most of the history plays. What gives the tremendous force it undoubtedly possesses in *Macbeth* is intrinsic magnificence of the passages in which it appears. The word in *Macbeth* also has only one significance - the literal one. In the history plays, the word 'blood' plays two major roles. First it has the same meaning as it has in *Macbeth*. For both *Macbeth* and *Richard II* are plays in which men's minds often turn towards the sword:

...... *Our kingdom's earth should not be soiled*
With that dear blood which it hath fostered (I, iii, 125-126)

says Richard in one more instinctive association of blood and earth. Secondly, blood in the history plays also stands figuratively for inheritance, descent and familial pride. This is the chief motivating theme of *Richard II* the right of a monarch of unquestionably legitimate blood to his throne. The two significances often interplay, giving the simple word a new multiple connotation wherever it appears. The finest instance of this merging of ideas is in the Duchess of Gloucester's outburst to John of Gaunt. The word 'blood' is also used in other

senses in the play. Because of the multiple functios, the word in this play loses much of the concentrated vividness and application it has in *Macbeth* where it means but one unmistakable thing. The meaning of the word as it pulses from beginning to end in *Richard II* is violation of the laws of blood descent which leads but to the spilling of precious English blood. This marks the emotional rhythm of the play.

3.16 Questions:

1. Discuss *Richard II* as a historical play.
2. Consider *Richard II* as a lyrical drama.
3. *Richard II* is 'a fierce struggle of an enraged usurper against a weak, though lawful king' - Discuss.
4. Sketch the character of King Richard and Bolingbroke.
5. Bring out the significance of 'The Garden Scene' in *Richard II.*

3.17 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. English history 2. Raphel Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland 3. England 4. King John, Henry VIII 5. Plot construction 6. *Edward II* 7.Queen 8.John of Gaunt 9.rude and unpopular 10.*Richard II* . 11.Bolingbroke12. Bolingbroke's

3.18 Further Reading

1. *The Development of Shakespeare's imagery* - by Wolfang Clemens
2. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Richard II*- Edited by Paul M. Cubeta.
3 *Casebook Series 'Richard II'* - Edited by Nicholas Brooke.
4. *Richard II* by Helen Morris.

UNIT-4

Space for Hints

THE TEMPEST

4.1 Introduction

The Tempest is one of the last plays that Shakespeare wrote. The date normally assigned to the play is 1611-12. The play was probably acted for the first time at the Court in 1611, and might have been revised before it was acted again at the Court in 1613, during the marriage celebrations of King James's daughter. It was particularly suitable for the purpose since the Princess, like Miranda, the heroine of the play, was a princess of an island. The masque of Ceres and Juno may have been added for this occasion. The play is accepted by scholars as the most mature work of Shakespeare. The internal evidence of the verse and the style also confirm this judgement.

4.2 Objectives:

To make the students understand

- the characteristics of Shakespeare's last plays
- Colonisation theme
- The role of supernatural

4.3 Structure

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Objectives

4.3 Structure

4.4 Characteristics of Shakespeare's Last plays

4.5 The Plot

4.6 Commentary on the action

4.7 Governance in *The Tempest*

4.8. New Societies and Colonisation

4.9 The Treatment of Evil in *The Tempest*

4.10 The Supernatural in *The Tempest*

4.11 Questions

4.12 Key for Check Your Progress

4.13 Further Reading

4.4 Characteristics of Shakespeare's Last plays

During the first decade of King James's rule (he was crowned in 1603) tragi-comedy seems to have been very popular, as the productions of Beaumont and Fletcher seem to testify. The 'last plays' of Shakespeare are in the tragi-comic vein, but Shakespeare has added a dimension of his own and so the last plays are often termed 'Romances'. As in tragi-comedy, the action may begin by some act that seems to lead to tragedy, or tragic consequences, but later the turn of events brings about a happy ending. In the plays *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale* the tragic consequences is the loss of family harmony, and the actual loss of a daughter. In *Cymbeline*, too, there is not merely loss but also political consequence. In *The Tempest* both the political theme and the personal theme are taken together. in a fresh way. In these plays the action of the play covers a number of years long enough for the infant (that was lost) to grow up. The pattern in *The Tempest* is that past action is unified. Critics have pointed out that *The Tempest* is the one play of Shakespeare where the classical "three unities" of time, place and action are followed. In The Tempest, Shakespeare presents three levels: the savage, the civilised and the spirit world; and also the Natural, the Human and the Supernatural. These are shown in close juxtaposition and in interrelationship with each other.

The last plays seem to have the overall pattern of presenting a discord, reconciliation, and the hope for continuity. Reconciliation is the motive in these plays.

By the time the last plays came to be written, the Company of players to which Shakespeare belonged had become The King's Men ; and they had acquired not only the use of public theatre "The Globe" but they were also giving performances at the indoor theatre at 'Blackfriars', as well as the Court. The last plays, therefore do not conform as closely to the. needs of the public or Shakespearen stage conditions as some of the earlier plays. More stage properties and devices were used and greater freedom and artificial lighting gave the performances a new dimension. The Masque like quality found in *The Tempest* is probably due to the fact that it was acted not only in the out-door or public stage but also more often (as in the Court performance) in an indoor stage. Court Masque demanded a good deal of ingenious stage machinery, and there would

Check Your Progress Questions

1 The date assigned to the play *The Tempest* is ____

2 ____ is the most mature work of Shakespeare

3.The last plays are often termed ____

4.In this play, both ____ themes are taken together

have been little difficulty in providing for the descent of the Goddesses in an indoor stage, during the masque within the play.

One more characteristic that is found in *The Tempest* is that one character is able to control all the three planes of reality through his magic (spiritual?) powers. In no other play of Shakespeare do we find this phenomenon. Prospero is human, and yet superhuman, in his ability to call to his aid the spirit Ariel who is his agent to bring about the action that the poet intends. Prospero is the artist and Ariel the art. It is through Ariel that the elements of nature, human characters, as well as Caliban are kept under control. This peculiar characteristic has led critics to identify Prospero with Shakespeare, and symbolically Ariel as the genius of poetry, or inspiration.

The Tempest is also unique in that there is no direct or obvious source for the story. Shakespeare's normal practice is to take a story from other source and adapt it for his dramatic purpose. A German comedy on a similar theme existed but it cannot be proved that Shakespeare had access to this source. The similarity may be adventitious. But the tale of a wreck and of a mysterious island peopled by spirits owed a good deal to recent and sensational events. In 1609 a fleet of ships with troops and colonists bound for Virginia set sail from London with Sir Thomas Gates as General and Sir George Summers as Admiral. A violent storm, dispersed the fleet, but the Admiral's ship, the best and strongest in the fleet, sprang a leak and drifted to the Bermuda islands said to be inhabited by witches and devils. The Bermuda coast was always the scene of storms (the still vexed Bermoothes). But the ship struck between two rocks, and the whole company got safely to shore and lived on a very pleasant island for almost two years till they built two more ships and finally reached Virginia. This news reached England in 1610. Two pamphlets describing these adventures, and in 1611 a further account by William Strachey, one of those cast ashore on the island seem to have caught Shakespeare's attention. But Prospero's island is in the Mediterranean, somewhere off the direct course from Tunis (North Africa) to Naples (Italy). Shakespeare also read an account by William Parry of the travels of Sir Anthony Shirley, published in 1601. This book mentions a Greek island which is almost another Eden, full of God's blessings, with sweet water, and all the fruit and fauna necessary for a comfortable life. One of Montaigne's Essays translated by John Florio, *Of Cannibals* seems to be the source of Gonzalo's ideal kingdom.

Montaigne seems to describe the noble savage's way of life compounded of travellers' tales of the American Indians and the Polynesian Islanders.

4.5 The Plot

4.5.1 The Evil Plot:

Prospero was the rightful Duke of Milan. But he devoted more of his time to the study of philosophy and magic than to affairs of state. So he had delegated his responsibilities of looking after state affairs to the ambitious Antonio, his brother. Antonio with the aid of the crafty King of Naples, Alonso, seized the dukedom from Prospero, and set him and his small daughter, Miranda adrift in a small boat. They would have perished miserably had not Gonzalo, an honest Neapolitan courtier secretly stocked the frail craft with food, clothing and the books of Magic which Prospero valued most.

Prospero and Miranda, the helpless exiles, drifted atlast to an island which had been the refuge of Sycorax, an evil sorceress. There Prospero found Caliban her son, a strange, misshappen creature of brute intelligence, able only to hew wood and draw water. Prospero made Caliban his slave.

Many spirits of air and water, who were under the torments of the sorceress Sycorax were freed by Prospero and thereafter they became obedient to Prospero's will. Ariel, chief of those spirits, was made to serve Prospero for a period of time, before he could be set at liberty. Prospero's magic made him a master of all the mysterious forces in the island. Ten years thus passed.

4.5.2 Repentence:

The tempest, from which the play gains its name is not a chance disturbance of wind and wave. It has been raised by the wise magician, Prospero, in order to bring to the island the ship carrying the very men who had wronged him. Alonso was returning to Italy after a visit to Tunis to celebrate the marriage of his daughter, Claribel. In his company were Duke Antonio of Milan and other gentlemen of the court.

Prospero's action in raising the storm is to turn the thoughts of Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian (Alonso's brother) to repentance. Of these Antonio is the most wicked, and even on the island suggests that Sebastian murder Alonso and thereby take the throne of Naples since Ferdinand (Alonso's son) is presumed dead. This action is prevented by Ariel who further provides them with a feast

arries it off as a Harpy and in a speech reminds them of their guilt, suggesting that they will receive just punishment if they do not repent and turn over a new leaf. Alonso is at once repentant because he believes that his evil deed has caused the death of his own son. The others are gradually brought round by the event that follows, namely, their meeting with Prospero in whose power they find themselves.

The sub-plot as often in Shakespeare, echoes the main plot. Caliban persuades Stephano, a drunken Butler and Trinculo, a jester to attempt the murder of Prospero so that they can make themselves the lords of the island. Caliban is taken up by the Butler and the Jester because he happens to have drink with them. He vows that he will serve them and thus escape from Prospero. This plot too is brought to nothing through the actions of Ariel who tempts them with a display of kingly garments and then drives them into a filthy pool.

4.5.3 Reconciliation

The reconciliation then is through the love at first sight of Ferdinand and Miranda. Ferdinand is disarmed and made powerless by Prospero's magic, and established as a 'patient logman'. Yet he is prepared for this servitude since Miranda encourages him. This too is a part of the master plan of Prospero. The children of erstwhile enemies are now betrothed bringing about in themselves a reconciliation. But even surer is the heartfelt reconciliation that follows. Alonso realizes that his son is alive and well, and is on the way to a happy union with Miranda. Sebastian and Antonio are powerless in this situation, and Antonio hands over the Dukedom of Milan to his brother, while the good Gonzalo rejoices over the various modes of reconciliation that he finds.

There is continuity in the events that have taken place. Prospero has learnt his lesson, and will now devote his time to the affairs of the state. Ferdinand is ready to take over the government of Naples from his ageing, repentant father, and the union of these two provinces will ensure the strength of Naples and Milan while the children of Ferdinand and Miranda will ensure the continuity of this happy state. Caliban may rule his island in solitary splendour, while Ariel is given his freedom.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. The Tempest is raised by the wise magician ____

6. ____ appears in the form of Harpy

7. The sub-plot echoes the ____

8. Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo attempt to murder ____

4.6 Commentary on the Action

ACT –I

The two crises - the storm without and the storm within.

Scene i: The supernatural storm and the natural reaction:

The opening scene is noisy and dramatic. Amidst sounds of tempestuous noise we see the master and the crew of the ship doing their best to save the ship from disaster, taking in the sails, steering for the open sea for fear of the danger of being run aground. Suddenly it seems that the ship splits and no hope is left. In this crisis and confusion Alonso, King of Naples and Gonzalo, Sebastian and Antonio make brief but characteristic comments and speeches. That Antonio and Sebastian are evil characters is evident from their swearing and their attitude to the crew.

The scene is extremely realistic, as acted out on the front of the apron stage, with thunderous noise and very quick action catching the attention of the audience, involving them in the crisis and moving them to pity and sympathy for those lost in the storm. *The storm without is symbolic of the storm within* (c.f. *King Lear*, where the storm without indicates the violence of the passions within) We are soon to learn, however, that this storm is a magic storm, a supernatural storm raised by Prospero for setting in motion the repentance and reconciliation of the four main characters introduced so far.

Scene ii:

In contrast there is a long, quiet, conversational scene between Prospero and Miranda who emerge from the back of the stage and come forward. Miranda's immediate reaction is the same as that of the audience "Allay the storm I have suffered". A god of Power, would have saved the souls. The mention of the god of power, and the suggestion that Prospero is responsible and is acting like a god is presented in the very opening lines, and should be taken as the key to the action. Prospero reassures her and us, 'Nobody is lost'; in fact they are to be 'saved'.

Prospero takes Miranda (and us) back to the earlier storm, a psychological, political, and a very real storm when he as Duke of Milan was deposed by his own brother and set adrift with Miranda -'there they hoist us, To cry to the sea, that roar'd to us ; to sigh To the winds'. The psychological storm is that the deposition was against natural order i.e. the subject should not rise against his lord, brother

should not rise against his elder brother, and an independent Dukedom should not be made subservient to the King of neighbouring Naples for such a purpose. In that storm, it was Providence that saved them, by bringing them to the island in safety. Now Prospero is going to act as providence, for his auspicious hour has come and his enemies are in his hand. With Ariel's entrance we discover how Prospero is able to act as Providence - the great master has the power to control the spirit. Ariel reports that the magic storm 'infected the reason' of those on ship and made them desperate, i.e. a psychological storm was the result. We are further assured that all are safe and scattered about the island. At the same time we learn of Ariel's history and how he had been indebted to Prospero for his partial freedom. We learn of the origin of Caliban and of presence too, preparing us for entrance. The recalcitrant yet poetic nature of Caliban is made clear even at the very beginning, and the fact that he is completely in the power of Prospero is also made evident.

With the exit of Caliban, room is made for the entry of Ferdinand, who is led in by Ariel's invisible playing and singing. If the storm introduced the element of disharmony in the universe, the elements of music and song is now introduced by Ariel's music and song. The first reaction of Ferdinand is that the music waits on 'some God of the island'. Our attention is thus drawn to the Godlike role of Prospero. Further it is pointed out that his harmonious music has allayed the storm without, and is now allaying the storm of passion and sorrow within Ferdinand. Now Prospero draws Miranda's attention to Ferdinand, and she immediately takes him for a spirit - 'a thing divine for nothing natural I ever saw so noble'. In return, Ferdinand takes Miranda to be the goddess on whom the music attends. Prospero's remarks make it clear that even the attraction of Ferdinand for Miranda is a part of Ariel's mission, directed by Prospero; yet Prospero is going to make the mutual love of Ferdinand and Miranda 'uneasy and so he uses his magic to overpower him, to frame charges and thus keep him in submission. We are however, made to see that this submission is willingly accepted by Ferdinand because of his love for Miranda.

This brings us to the end of Act I and we have learnt that the action (the storm that we witnessed in Sc. 1) is generated by Prospero and carried out by Ariel. Such action has become possible because of the magical powers of Prospero. Through Ariel he is able to dominate (a) over the elements, in order to

raise the storm, (b) over the minds of men, in creating psychological terror among those on the ship (c) over the emotions of Ferdinand and Miranda and (d) over the physical actions of Ferdinand and Caliban. Prospero's power therefore extends far beyond the normal and the human and he is indeed capable of acting as providence or god. This kind of power in a human being has never before been used by Shakespeare (c.f. Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus)* It is clear too, that Prospero is using these powers for good and not for evil to bring about repentance and reconciliation. This brings to The *Tempest* unearthy and a masquelike quality that is not found in any other play, except perhaps in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is a very different kind of drama.

ACT -II

Scene i: Evil engineered by Antonio and Sebastian

Shakespeare introduces us to the first group of men who have been brought to the island, the group of men who are the enemies of Prospero and have been responsible for his exile. Alonso grieves over the loss of his son Feɪdinand. Gonzalo makes all effort to comfort him. The finer qualities of these two (Alonso and Gonzalo) stand out in contrast to the other pair (Antonio and Sebastian). The nature of the other pair is almost at once seen when they make fun of the good Gonzalo's effort to comfort the king. Sebastian's indictment of the king's action in marrying of Claribel to the king of Tunis is like rubbing the sore when he should bring the plaster. They are not thankful for their own safety even. Antonio sees only, the opportunity to subvert Sebastian's mind and point out to him the opportunity of making himself the king of Naples by committing the murder of his brother. This evil plot of Antonio is stressed in order to remind us of Alonso's guilt and the need for punishment and repentance on his part. Antonio and Sebastian either amuse themselves or plot against others - a very selfish course of action. Opportunity for murder is provided by the sleep that overpowers the rest of the King's group, but the watchful Ariel prevents mischief.

In spite of the power of Prospero, evil still co-exists and given the opportunity it is ready to take the upper hand. The rebellion is not, this time, against Prospero but against Alonso, pointing to the fact that initial evil will breed more and more evil. Yet through Ariel, Prospero remains in control of the situation and does not let it deteriorate further. If we, as the audience, had felt that

his action in raising the magic storm was too excessive to right the wrong, we are here shown that the ancient wrong and the evil in the heart are still active.

Scene ii:

The comic element also presents an echo of the same subversive evil. The mood of the scene is set by their rebellious cursing of Caliban. But Trinculo, the jester's long and humorous soliloquy relieves the seriousness of the cursing of Caliban. Meanwhile Stephano enters singing a drunken song, a coarse and harsh contrast to the sweet songs of Ariel. The musical contrast is noteworthy. Stephano s cure for the ills of life are his bottle of wine and he administers this freely. The result is that Caliban declares, "That is a brave God and bears celestial liquor . Caliban is prepared to change masters, and to swear allegiance to Stephano, who claims to be the Man in the Moon. If Stephano is taken for a god by Caliban it merely proves his being a poor credulous monster. But drink does also bring out the poetry in Caliban's speech: ' I prithee let me bring thee where crabs grow' etc. This group finds freedom too, a) in the bottle, and b) in the change from the rule of Prospero to the rule of Stephano. Caliban leads the way to this new found freedom.

ACT - III : Progress on Three Fronts

Scene i: The Growth of Love

The most powerful weapon in Prospero's armoury is not the magic of Ariel, but the power of love between his own daughter and the son of his erstwhile enemy. Nothing can convert evil and hate, as the power of love, and in this scene the purity and completeness of the love of Ferdinand and Miranda make it the pattern of love, a love not of passion but of service. Against the orders of Prospero, Miranda comes to meet and comfort Ferdinand, who is bearing logs at the command of Prospero. While Prospero resumed to be in his cell watches from the upper stage, he blesses their mutual declaration of love to each other, and their humble attitude to what is for them an act of self giving not merely for each other but for the community and their parents.

Scene ii: The sub-plot against Prospero takes shape

Caliban claims that Prospero has taken the island from him by sorcery, and he calls on Stephano to avenge Caliban by killing Prospero when he is asleep and so become lord of the island and of Miranda. Humour is provided by the unseen presence of Ariel who gets Trinculo into trouble by his intervention in the

conversation. The methods of killing Prospero are worthy of a Caliban - 'punch him with a stake or cut his wesand'. But Ariel leads them off by playing on his pipe and tabor. Once more Caliban shows his superiority to the other two by his appreciation of the sounds and sweet airs in the islands. The enchanted nature of the environment is stressed and again the setting is not naturalistic. Yet Prospero takes note on the plotting of these men. He asks Ariel to do something to quell the plot.

Scene iii: The confrontation of the men of sin

Alonso and his lords wander in search of Ferdinand. But they are now weary and are in need of rest and refreshment. Sebastian and Antonio are still intent upon their wicked purpose to slay Alonso and seize the Kingdom of Milan. But supernatural action now intervenes in the shape of the presentation of a banquet to the accompaniment of solemn music by strange shapes. The shapes invite the group to partake of the food provided on the table. At first they are afraid but taking the shapes for the local inhabitants who have shown considerable friendliness, the group prepares to eat. Suddenly Ariel enters with thunder and lightning and the food vanishes. This shock treatment is prelude to what Ariel is to say to these men. Ariel reminds them of their former sin in supplanting Prospero, and proclaims that Ferdinand's death is part of retribution. More will overtake them, he says, if they do not repent and lead a clean life after their repentance. Prospero's remarks to Ariel reveal that he had educated Ariel on what to say. Gonzalo alone who seems to have had nothing on his conscience, remains unaffected by the incident, but Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio are moved and affected. Their great guilt begins to pain their spirits.

The threads of the plot are being gathered into Prospero's hand for the ultimate completion of the pattern that he has pre-determined.

Act-IV

The love of Ferdinand and Miranda is sanctified by Prospero and the goddesses Juno and Ceres. Caliban's plot is overthrown.

The scene opens with Prospero explaining to Ferdinand why he was harsh to him and ratifying his rich gift. He counsels temperance and self-control in love, and then orders Ariel to show the young couple some 'vanity of his art'. The Masque, then is presented.

Iris, the messenger of Juno, goddess of the sky, invokes the presence of Ceres, goddess of Nature's produce, in couplets, such as are used in Masques. (Since the verse is not of the highest quality it has been suggested that this masque inset was hastily written for the court Performance in 1613). Ceres enters and is informed by Iris that a contract of true love is to be celebrated and blessings bestowed. It is noteworthy that Venus and Cupid are not of the party since they are not of the high spiritual quality that Prospero has demanded of the lovers. Then Juno is either let down from the top of the stage or enters and then Ceres and Juno go together to bless the couple with prosperity and issue.

A dance of Nymphs and Reapers is then performed to round off the Masque. The bringing in of these goddesses, acted by spirits gives a peculiar tone to the play, a tone of formality and other worldliness. Prospero's last speech "our revels now are ended" is one of the most famous in the play, and is symbolic not merely of the pageant of the masque but of life itself. "We are such stuff as dreams are made on: and our little life is rounded with a sleep".

The second part of the scene - the plot of Caliban - is now introduced. Ariel has led the drunken group into a filthy mantled pool and is now ready to produce them. Prospero has some brightly coloured clothes hung on a lime tree near his cell, and as they approach Trinculo sees these, and they are more interested in carrying these off than in killing Prospero, to Caliban's disgust. They are hunted out of the stage by dogs and hounds, and are to be tormented with pinches, cramp and convulsions. This is their punishment such as they can understand. It now remains for Prospero to draw all the threads together.

Act - V : The Pattern is Completed

Prospero now gets ready for the final conformation with his erstwhile enemies, whom he has brought to a more penitent mood. This mood is described by Ariel as being distracted, while Gonzalo weeps over them while Ariel goes to fetch them. Prospero makes another of his famous set speeches, showing his use of magic, and his power, which now he means to abjure. This is often described as Shakespeare's farewell to the stage.

The rebellious group comes in as though amazed and spell bound taking their places within a circle, Prospero has drawn on the stage while he addresses them. Once more he reminds them of their evil acts though kindlier than before. Once more he takes the role of Providence and promises them forgiveness. He is

even prepared to forgive his brother Antonio although he considers his action 'unnatural'. Apparently in his magician's robes he is not recognised by the party, and so he now changes with the help of Ariel into his Ducal costume. The Solemn music with which the scene began. is made lighter and gayer, showing a change in mood by Ariel's song and Prospero arranges for the Master of the ship and the Boatswain to be brought.

Alonso is the first to react rightly by resigning his overlordship of the Dukedom of Milan, and asking for pardon. The only word spoken by the guilty pair, Antonio and Sebastian, is when the latter says that the Devil speaks through Prospero. which is cut short by Prospero's firm denial. Antonio is called upon to give up the Dukedom. He does not say a word. Strangely, Alonso wishes Ferdinand and Miranda were King and Queen in Naples, a presage of what is to be. Prospero, now as showman, draws the curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess within. This masterly move brings about the reconciliation which is cemented with the union of Ferdinand and Miranda. It is left to Gonzalo once more to invoke blessings of the Gods upon the union. Gonzalo sums up the pattern of the play in his famous speech beginning with "was Milan thrust from Milan" and ending with "when no man was his own". The Master of the ship and Boatswain now arrive to report that the ship is in an excellent condition to undertake the voyage to Naples. Then Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo come in and the entire party is now united. The education of Caliban is complete, in that he now recognises Stephano as a drunkard and Trinculo as a clown. Prospero finally invites them all to spend the night with him, and then to leave the next morning, and further promises that the Royal ship will catch up with the rest of the fleet on the way home.

In the Epilogue, it would seem that once more Shakespeare is requesting that he be set free the task of producing more plays,

As you from crimes would pardon 'd be
Let your indulgence set me free.

4.7 Governance in *The Tempest*

For a play that is not historical. *The Tempest* has much material symbolic and otherwise regarding the problems of 'rule'. These impressions concern not merely with rule in the older states but also in the new colonies that were being

established in the New World. As we have seen, some of the ideas for the action were inspired by the travel adventures of colonies going to Virginia, and to the Far East. It is not surprising therefore that some of Shakespeare's more mature speculations of these and similar matters are shadowed forth in the play.

Prospero realises that it is his own failure to assume full responsibility that led to the rise of evil in his brother Antonio. He says

The government I cast upon my brother

And to my state grew stranger ..... (Act I. Sc.iii, 75-76)

Antonio slowly but surely gains full experience in the craft of government and soon assumes complete power and responsibility. The result was that it awakened an evil nature, and with unbounded confidence he decided that he must become the duke himself. So he joined with the King of Naples, promising to pay him tribute if Alonso would help him to overthrow Prospero. Alonso's forces entered Milan, took Prospero and his daughter captive and handed over the rule to Antonio. Prospero also suggests that his excess of love for his brother and his trusting nature had been partly responsible. He perhaps believed that the love of a brother, and the loyalty of a subject for his lord would not deteriorate but he found them otherwise.

The strange harshness of his treatment of not merely his enemies (Alonso and his court) on the island but also of Caliban, may be attributed to some bitterness of feeling. But we are rather surprised at his harsh treatment of Ariel and of Ferdinand who is soon to be his son-in-law. For instance, the witch Sycorax had imprisoned Ariel in a cloven pine for dozen years, but we hardly expect Prospero to threaten a like punishment.

If thou more murmurest, I will rend an oak

And peg thee in his knotty entrails, till

Thou has howled away twelve -winters. (Act I, Sc.ii, 295-297)

Similarly his treatment of Ferdinand at their first meeting is surprising. He charges him of usurping his father's title, being a spy and a traitor. Prospero says, that Ferdinand is worthy of being enslaved for carrying logs. Even Miranda is shocked and attempts to protest. She knows this is 'unwonted'. Prospero's strange harshness is also seen in the hunting of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo with hounds. This harshness leads one to conclude that Prospero realises the necessity of enforcing some kind of discipline. This he has learnt through the need to

control Caliban. First he treated Caliban with kindness, kept him in his own cell, taught him language, and endeavoured to give him the same kind of 'nurture' that he gave Miranda. But he is soon forced to imprison Caliban, to restrict his movements, and to punish him, with cramps and pinches so as to keep him obedient. This harshness is not natural to him but it develops from necessity.

Yet he does not take revenge. He has not brought Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian to the island to wreak vengeance on them. Ariel as a minister of Fate conveys the news that Ferdinand has been drowned because of his father's guilt but we know that it is not so. He pronounces lingering perdition to make the guilty feel repentant, feel true "heart sorrow" and follow "a clear life" henceforth. In fact Prospero knows that no lingering perdition will be inflicted on them. But Antonio, the wickedest of the lot is spoken to with considerable harshness.

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive,
Thy rankest fault - (Act V, Sc. i, 130 - 133)

The fault is a selfish violation of loyalty to a brother. Prospero's aim is to make the guilty, repent, and to secure their restoration to their normal selves. As Gonzalo remarks they each 'found themselves when no man was his own'. His own statement

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,
Yet, with my nobler reason, 'gainst my fury
Do I take part; the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance; they being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further. (Act V, Sc.i, 25-30)

Check Your Progress Questions

9. For how many years Ariel has been imprisoned?

10. Who is the wickedest of the lot?

11. ____ is enamoured of the drinks that Stephano and Trinculo introduce him to?

Prospero has used his time of exile, to consider his own weakness, and to prepare for his ultimate return. To this end he has educated Miranda to be a princess and himself for the responsibilities of rule, not with the help of Ariel, but by his own strength of mind and virtue. A part of the statesman like skill that he has learnt is to ally himself with his neighbours. The marriage alliance with Alonso's son, Ferdinand, now strengthens his own position as Duke of Milan and ensures a stable future for both of them, besides being the first way of effecting reconciliation.

4.8. New Societies and Colonisation

Gonzalo's 'ideal republic' based on Montaigne's essay points to some dream of perfection. When Colonists began to settle in the North American continent, some of them were no doubt taken up by the simplicity of social organisation of the Red Indian tribes. They had 'no kind of traffic'.

no name of Magistrate:
Letters should not be known: riches, poverty
Bourn, bound of land, tithe vineyard, none,

The men seemed idle - though their vocation was hunting - and the women too, did not go out to labour. They lived on the plenty of nature, and did not know of modern warfare with guns. It seemed that it was possible to find a simpler mode of life, and happier state of being.

When the men of higher civilisation like Prospero, came into contact with such a state of being they first endeavoured to impart their civilisation and code of values, to the 'savage', symbolised by Caliban. But evil and other natural human instincts seemed to frustrate their efforts. We see this in Caliban when he took no point of goodness from his training. On the other hand the savage was prone to learn the evil effect and habits of civilisation. Caliban is enamoured of the drinks that Stephano and Trinculo introduce him to.

The stern treatment of Caliban by Prospero is perhaps considered a necessity for his true welfare and education, for it does remain true that Caliban too learns discrimination when he is sober. He is able to say

.... *What a thrice-double ass*
Was I to take this drunkard for a God,
And worship this dull fool!

If Caliban is deprived of his liberty of evil conduct, he is restored to liberty and rule at the end.

4.9 The Treatment of Evil in *The Tempest*

The island on which Prospero and Miranda have been cast is in some ways an 'enchanted island' far from normal life. Yet even here the presence of evil is felt. The island was under the domination of the witch Sycorax, who has left behind her son Caliban. Caliban is a strange mixture of the poetic and evil side of natural instinct. He may be said to symbolize the instinctual life of man. This

instinctual life, if not controlled by reason and civilisation which Prospero endeavours to instill, would lead to selfish indulgence which is reprehensible. Caliban endeavours to seduce Miranda, and when he is punished by being deprived of his liberty, he becomes rebellious, and ultimately seeks to destroy Prospero in an attempt to regain his freedom. But the men he has allied himself with, Stephano and Trinculo, turn out to be a drunkard and a dull fool. He grows to a kind of maturity when once he realizes this.

As Duke of Milan, secluding himself from the business of government, and confining himself to his studies, Prospero has opened the door to evil in his own family circle. His brother Antonio with the aid of the King of Naples is able to effect a coup and, depose him. Exiled in this enchanted island, Prospero is able to sort out his own weakness, and through his contemplative wisdom applies the remedy not merely to himself, but to those who have injured him. For this, it is necessary for him to teach Antonio, his brother, and Alonso and Sebastian of Naples, that evil is a destructive force in the human personality as well as in society, and that selfish indulgence in evil will bring retribution and suffering. Antonio has subverted private and public loyalty - his allegiance to his brother and his lord for selfish ends. Equally Alonso has aided him to achieve these ends for his own selfish benefit. Suffering was first inflicted on, Prospero and Miranda, but through the tempest raised by Prospero the threat of retribution hangs over the guilty pair Alonso and Antonio and over Sebastian. Prospero introduces this element into his idyllic island for a moral purpose.

A good part of the action is devoted to a recital of the primary evil that was committed twelve years ago. Once more the evil nature in Antonio and in Sebastian is reiterated in their plot against Alonso. Their motives are seem to be purely selfish. They are prepared to go against any codes of conduct for their own ends.

This disregard for natural bonds to achieve selfish ends is self destructive, as they are unable to recognise the place of morality in human existence:

Antonio: *And look how well my garments sit upon me Much feater than before My brother's servants were then my fellows; now they are my men.*

Sebastian: *But, for your conscience –*

Antonio : *Ay sir Where lies that? If 't were a kibe,*

'Twould put me to my slipper: but I feel not
This deity in my bosom: twenty consciences
That stand 'twixt me and Milan candied be they
And melt ere they molest"' (Act II, Sc.i, 268-276)

It is typical of the hardened sinner that he feels no qualm of conscience and Antonio has revelled in his evil deed for twelve years. Three inches of steel, he says, can lay Gonzalo to bed for ever The callousness of this attitude shows the state to which he is fallen. Sebastian who has been 'standing water', is encouraged to follow the evil in Antonio.

Thy case dear friend
Shall be my precedent as thou got 'st Milan,
I'll come by Naples Draw thy sword One stroke
Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest:
And I the king shall love thee, (Act II, Sc.i, 287-290)

Having established this evil, not merely in the past but in the present, the action of the play proceeds to present Ariel as the instrument of Destiny, crying, "You are three men of sin" and threatening them with retribution unless they repent and turn a new leaf. The evil men are brought to judgement. This call to repentance is however also a call to salvation. It is not vengeance alone that Prospero seeks. These men have been shown that evil will lead to self-destruction. It is this vision of the end of evil that drives them to a realisation of the need for change and repentance, even the need for expiation.

The winds did sing it to me and the thunder.
(That deep dreadful organ-pipe) pronoun 'ed
The name of Prospero: it did bass my trespass.
Therefore my son I the ooze is bedded. and
I'll seek him deeper than e 'er plummet sounded
And with him there lie mudded (Act III. sc. iii, 97 - 102)

Once such penitence is achieved, Prospero is prepared to declare that the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance. Thus we are prepared for the great reconciliation and forgiveness in the fifth Act. The best of that Act however is the reconciliation between Alonso and Prospero. It is noteworthy that Antonio never says a word to Prospero and Sebastian merely suggests that the Devil speaks through him only to be cut short. Forgiveness is all they deserve-no more. But

Alonso and Gonzalo rejoice in the union of Ferdinand and Miranda and this union is the hope for the future.

4.10 The Supernatural in *The Tempest*

The Tempest is a play which has a great affinity to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in that it transports us to an enchanted world. In *The Tempest* the world is a composite of the wonders reported by travellers who had returned from voyages to the new found West, or to the fabled East. It is also a poet's wonderland, as island peopled by witches and spirits, as idyllic as a newfound Eden. It is an island where the bounds between the natural and the supernatural seem uncertain, and even perhaps overlap. It seems natural to think of the island as containing wheat and barley, turfy mountains, flat meads, broom groves and rocky sea marges, with coral deeps and roaring breakers. Gonzalo finds even the grass rich and everything advantageous of life. On the other hand, according to Cailban his mother brushed dew from unwholesome fens and Sebastian too finds the air as it were perfumed by a fen. It is strange that the good characters find pleasant scene, and lime groves, while the evil characters find nettles, and thorns and filthy-mantled pools. So too the evil characters hear sounds that frighten them like lions roaring or bulls bellowing, while to others *the isle is full of noises.*

Sounds, and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about my ears; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again;..... (Act III, Sc.ii, 131-136)

Caliban knows where quick freshes are, and all qualities of the isle.

'I prithee let me bring thee where crabs grow;
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig - nuts:
Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee
To clustering filberts, and some times I'll get the
Young scamels from the rock. (Act II, Sc.ii, 63-68)

These qualities of the island are not given in anyone set description but are found scattered in profusion throughout the play, providing an idyllic setting for the habitation of the creatures that dwell therein.

The master of the isle is indeed Prospero, the great magician who by his power of good has been able to destroy the effects of the control of the witch Sycorax, and gain control over her son, Caliban. The nature of Prospero's magic is made most explicit in his own statement that he has been able to use the power of the elves of the hills, the demi- puppets, the urchins feared by Caliban and other such supernatural beings, to work his purposes through their aid.

(Weak masters though ye be - I have be - dimmed
The noontide sun, call 'd forth the mutinous winds,
And, 'twixt the green sea and the azur 'd vault
Set roaring war. (Act V, Sc.i, 41-44)

Even during the play (lasting three hours) Prospero retired to his cell to study his books of magic in order to enforce her spells and Caliban knows that deprived of his books his power will be harmless. There is no doubt that it is Prospero's control over the spirits that enables him to work out the plan which he masterminds, and brings the plan to such a brilliant conclusion.

His chief aid is, however, Ariel whom he has freed from imprisonment in a pine tree for a dozen years. In return Ariel is prepared to serve Prospero with the aid of the spirits whom he can command. Ariel has the freedom of air, water and fire as we see from his description of how he engineered the tempest. He flashed and burned, and set a sulphurous roaring and built up the tempest from the sea as from the heavens so that Neptune himself seemed to shake his dread trident. Ariel is able to travel like a spirit anywhere in a trice, and to provide spirits to take the parts of two masques. The first where Ariel himself takes the form of the Harpy and the messenger of Destiny, and in the second where Ariel takes the form of Iris, summons other spirits who act as Juno and Ceres. It is because of this that Prospero can say:

.... *These our actors,*
(As I foretold you) - were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, thin air;
.... *And, like the baseless fabric of this vision*
....
Leave not a rack behind. (Act IV, Sc.i, 149-155)

The total effect of the play is certainly tempered by the use of the two masques. The 'living drollery' of the first, where 'strange shapes' bring in a table

Check Your Progress Questions

12. *The Tempest* has a great affinity to ____ because it transports to an enchanted world.

13 Prospero's chief aid is received from ____

14 The masque of ____ is seen only by Ferdinand, Miranda and Prospero.

and a banquet in silence with however gentle actions in dumb show seem to be kindly disposed, though at first they inspire fear through their sudden disappearance. This initial fear being dispelled, a greater fear is brought down upon them by the appearance of the Harpy to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, who with a quaint device makes the banquet vanish, just as the lords prepare to taste the food. The Harpies were the messengers of the Furies (Eumendies) in Greek legend, and hence can speak as messengers of Retribution or Destiny. Ariel's terrible indictment is more effecuve because it is preceded and followed by dumb shows. This pageant is the heart of the action. the instrument for the change of heart of the three men of sin. It is to the supernatural, that men of sin must answer.

The Masque of Juno and Ceres, seen only by Ferdinand and Miranda and Prospero himself is of quite a different quality. It calls heaven down to earth to bless the young couple. Instead of thunder and lightning and ominous silence and the voice of Destiny, we have soft music, poetry and song, which Ferdinand describes as harmonious. This is followed by a dance of Nymphs and Reapers, hated by spirits. Prospero's own blessings to their union, re-inforced by blessings from above, set a strangely spiritual tone to this love affair - different from any other in the whole of Shakespeare. The effect that it has on the tone of the play is equally deep and lasting, giving it another - worldly quality uniting heaven and earth.

This unearthly and other-worldly quality is maintained throughout by the use of music and song. Except for the drunken catch of Stephano and Trinculo, all the music and songs are provided by Ariel. Ariel's songs being those of a spirit partake of this strange and unearthly quality. Ariel playing and softly singing, "*Come unto these yellowsands*" and calling spirits to bear the burden set the tone to the music in the play. '*Full fathom five*' introduces sea nymphs ringing the knell for Ferdinand's lost father. Ariel is equally capable of providing solemn music for the benefit of the men of sin and his '*Awake, awake*'. though soft, does alert the King and Gonzalo in time to prevent mischief on them. The most beautiful of the scene is, of cou the masque of Juno and of Ceres to the accompaniment of music, song and ce. Ariel is also able to perform creditably on the pipe and tabor for the delectation of the comic group. Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban. One of the most airy and light of Ariel's songs is his last one "*Where the bee sucks*".

This permeation of the play with music and harmony sets it apart from other plays in that this harmony is symbolic of the natural, the human and the supernatural. Human discords are ultimately harmonised with the help of the world of the spirits. An island full of sounds and sweet airs is symbolic of what earth can be if the spirit be willing and sin be held at bay.

It is indeed fitting that *The Tempest* should be called a Romance. It partakes of the special quality, associated with Romance in its beauty, its strangeness, its spiritual quality, its music and dance and masques. But above all, the play is Romantic in that it does unite in its totality, heaven and earth. The Supernatural and the natural are united in so intimate a manner that they are seen as two sides of the same life, the life of man and the life of the Gods. The glory of Shakespeare is that he has been able to secure the willing suspension of disbelief for so ultimately romantic a theme and to embody so universal a theme with such unearthly charm.

4.11 Questions

1. *The Tempest* is a study in sin and redemption - Discuss.
2. What use does Shakespeare make of the supernatural in *The Tempest*?
3. Examine the relation between the main plot and the underplot in *The Tempest.*
4. Is Prospero a personification of Providence *in The Tempest.*
5. "Caliban represents the physical as opposed to the spiritual which is represented by Ariel" - Consider.
6. The Play, *The Tempest* is itself a metaphor - Discuss.

4.12 Key For Check Your Progress

1. 1611-12	2.*The Tempest*	3.Romances
4.political, personal	5.Prospero	6. Ariel
7.main	8. Prospero	9. 12
10. Antonio	11.Caliban	12.*A Midsummer Night's Dream*
13.Ariel	14.Juno and Ceres	

4.13 Further Reading:

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UNIT - 5

ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Space for Hints

5.1 Introduction

Before the first permanent play house was constructed in about 1575, a temporary movable stage known as the booth stage of the market was dominant in England. It was a small rectangular stage mounted on barrels and 'open' as it was being surrounded by spectators on three sides. Some times the players chose a baiting house or a game house (bear-garden or bull-ring) for their performances. Sometimes the players staged their performances in an inn of a particular kind with a 'yard surrounded by a group of adjoining buildings, forming a rectangular enclosure'.

5.2 Unit Objectives

- To make the students understand stage divisions and settings
- To make the students analyse Elizabethan audience

5.3. Structure

5.1. Introduction

5.2. Unit Objectives

5.3. Structure

5.4. Two Types of Playhouses

5.5. The Elizabethan Stage

5.5.1. Stage divisions

5.5.2. Stage Setting

5.5.3. Summing Up

5.6 The Elizabethan Audience

5.6.1. Theatrical Attendance

5.6.2. The Composition of the audience

5.6.3. Audience behaviour

5.6.4. Elizabethan appraisals

5.6.5. Modern appraisals

5.7. Answers to Check Your Progress

5.8. Further Reading

5.4. Two Types of Playhouses

By the time Shakespeare began staging his plays, designated 'public' and 'private' play houses came into use. In general the public playhouses were 'large' 'round' outdoor theatres. The balconies and the stage were the only covered portions. Plays were performed during afternoons. A flag flying over the theatre indicated that a play would be staged that day. The private play-houses were smaller, rectangular, indoor theatres.

A public playhouse like *The Swan* or the *Globe* could accommodate 3000 spectators at a time. A private playhouse like the second *Blackfriars* or the *Phoenix* had space only for 700. At the public playhouses, a majority of the spectators stood in the yard for a penny and the rest sat in galleries and boxes for two pence and more. The private playhouse, completely roofed, provided seats for everybody in pit, galleries and boxes but charged each sixpence or more. Plays were performed at night by candle light in the private theatres.

To begin with, private playhouses were exclusively used by Boys Companies. Later on even the king's men began using them. Originally, the public playhouses (the *Theatre,* the *Curtain,* the *Rose,* the *Globe,* the *Fortune,* the *Red Bull)* were found only in the suburbs, and the private playhouses, (the *Paul's Playhouse,* the first and second *Blackfriars,)* within the city of London. But witn the opening of the *Whitefriars Playhouse* to the west of Ludgate, this distinction also disappeared. "Private theatre audiences tended to be better educated and of higher social rank than the public theatre audiences who were drawn mainly from the lower classes". The exclusiveness and superiority of the private playhouses were taken for granted.

"It is believed that the physical form of the public playhouse originated mainly in the animal-baiting house". James Burbage, when he built the first permanent playhouse, the *Theatre* in 1576 merely adopted the form of the baiting house with a few innovations. He built a large round structure very much like a baiting-house, but provided a paved "yard" in which he erected a stage. The stage was another version of the booth stage of the market place, but supported by posts rather than trestles or barrels. He also provided a tiring-house (where players dressed) and built a 'cover' over the rear part of the stage. His playhouse had a three gallery structure, unlike the baiting-house which had only two.

5.5 The Elizabethan Stage

Our chief pictorial source of information about the Elizabethan stage is the 'De Witt' drawing of the interior of the Swan play house. "This shows a round playhouse frame constructed apparently in 24 days and measuring presumably about 96 feet in diameter". It consisted of three galleries superimposed one above the other, defining a circular yard some 70 feet in diameter. At one side of the playhouse yard is a large rectangular stage (*proscenium*) which extends to about the middle of the yard. Probably the Swan stage was 43 ft. in width and about 27 feet in depth and 5.6" in height, about the average height of the booth stage.

At the back of the stage, in the De Witt drawing, is a tiring-house (mimorum aedes). The tiring house is equipped in the first storey with two large, double-hung doors opening out on the stage, and in the second storey, with a row of six windows which are presumably the openings of boxes 'of a Lord's room over the stage'. There are two large columns rising from the stage to support a cover and immediately above this stage-cover is a 'hut'. Above it is stationed a flag.

The stage of the early theatres was a raised platform "jutting out far into the audience at about the height of the average man's eyes but possibly much higher". The platform contained various traps through which actors (as ghosts or devils) could make their appearance or withdraw. It was partly covered by a roof jutting out from what Godwin called the partition separating the audience from the 'vestry'. This partition was the wall of the tiring houses and gave access to the platform through atleast two doors, one on each side of the inner stage, the study. Immediately above the study on the next level was a similar rear stage, usually called today 'the chamber'. On the audience side of this ran a balcony, the arena, with windows. There a trap in the floor of the chamber allowing access to study on the platform level.

5.5.1. Stage divisions

Thus the Elizabethan stage had four main parts, (a) the front stage, a bare platform without a curtain at the fore front, jutting out into the audience on which sat a few gallants the privileged, (b) the back stage, the part behind the pillars, which serve for any "covered" place a room in tavern or an office. The wall round this part of the stage was hung over with tapestry. At both the ends of this wall, there were small doors for the entrance and exit of actors; (c) an inner stage with

curtains which served many purposes. "It was Juliet's tomb, Prospero's cell, the canopy of Desdemona's bed or the hovel where poor Tom in *King Lear* is found taking shelter from the storm" and (d) an upper stage, just above the inner or real stage. "It was used for the balcony in *Romeo and Juliet*, or for the window in Shylock's house from where Jessica throws the casket or for Cleopatra's monument, to which the dying Antony is raised to wish Cleopatra goodbye. A canopy-like structure over the stage was called the heavens; from it angels or gods might descend from a trap in the floor above.

5.5.2. Stage Setting

The early Elizabethan theatres used no drop curtains or movable scenery. As there was no curtain in the front, a scene began when actors entered, and closed when they left. As the stage had to be cleared in full view of the audience, the playwright had to fashion his 'dialogue' in such a way as to enable this to happen. In the tragedies, the dead bodies were ceremoniously carried away. In *Julius Caesar,* the dead body of Caesar is given to Antony to be carried away by him. Hamlet drags away the body of Polonius. In comedies sometimes the actors left the stage singing and dancing or orders were given to that effect (as in *Much Ado About Nothing*). The absence of painted scenery made descriptive passages essential to indicate changes in the locality of the action. A playwright could change his scenes as frequently as he liked. The same stage became *Bohemia* and *Messina* in quick succession, as there were no painted scenes to be placed or removed. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare could introduce more than forty changes of scenes, without any hesitation. The location is frequently indicated through dialogue-what country is this? What hour now? -The lack of scenery resulted in the rapidity and swiftness of action. Besides, as the playwrights had to be descriptive, he could make full use of his verbal gifts. This partly accounts for the wealth and grandeur of poetic descriptions in Shakespeare's plays. The audience also had to use their imaginative faculty to the full and willingly suspend their disbelief for the moment. As the playhouse like *the Globe*, *the Curtain*, *the Red Bull* were 'open to the sky" and the performances were given during day, a night-scene could only be suggested through words, and the spectators had to be imaginative enough to take up the suggestion. A lighted candle suggested night, a chair and table - an office, or a room and a few plants - a forest.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. What are the two major classes of playhouses?
2. Name any two public playhouses
3. What are the four main parts of the Elizabethan stage?

Bertram Joseph points out that though the Elizabethan stage is often described as bare it was not colourless. Scholars are not decided as to the manner in which it may have been painted, but all are agreed that it could be hung with tapestries and curtains. The actors wore splendid clothes largely inherited from noble persons. Music, fireworks, guns and thunder were all used to suggest atmosphere and give colour to eye and ear. There were machines for descents from the heavens and for mounting aloft; "there was the pageantry of procession and tableaux ... the audience was asked to imagine, to respond to aesthetic experiences as the result of seeing a stage and properties representing imaginary scenes in which actors created character and incident by making the words of an author come alive". The primary duty of an actor in those days was to induce the audience to imagine an equivalent of what the author had himself imagined and written. Therefore acting had to be of the highest quality. On the Shakespearean stage all the roles were played by men and boys. Youngmen and gentle looking boys played the women characters, as no woman was employed on the stage. This may be one of the reasons for the use of disguise in the comedies. Portia, Nerissa, Jessica, Viola and Rosalind are a few of the characters who disguise themselves as men.

5.5.3. Summing Up

Thus, the Elizabethan stage was more plastic than our modern stages. Shakespeare was working within a very different set of conventions from those we are accustomed to in the theatre. He never protested against the limitations of the Elizabethan stage, though he revealed his awareness of them. Once in a chorus of *Henry V* he asked how this "wooden O" the Globe theatre, "this unworthy scaffold" could represent the vast field of France "where Agincourt and Harfleur were won" As drama is an artistic imitation of "nature" - human nature in general - he apparently felt that it was as futile to complain of the limitations of the theatre, as it would be to complain of the limitations of life itself: "All the world is a Stage/And all the men and women merely players".

Check Your Progress Questions

4. Which indicate the location?
5. What is the primary duty of the actor?
6. Who played the role of women?
7. Does Shakespeare protest against the limitations of the Elizabethan stage?
8. Whose drawing occupied the interior of the Swan playhouse?

5.6 The Elizabethan Audience

Not much has been written with certainty about Shakespeare's audiences. Much of this criticism is often careless or cynical. Many writers mistakenly

consider the Elizabethan audience to be 'reckless dare devils", "sensuous and sensual", "furious in hate and love", "violently passionate", and "frankly brutal".

Shakespeare was a popular playwright. He wrote, mainly atleast for the more popular kind of audience and, within certain limits, he conformed to its tastes. His plays were performed mostly in London's public theatres. Though his company for some time played at the Blackfriars indoor theatre we may safely assume that the great majority of his works were meant primarily for common or public theatres like *the Globe*. Sir Edmund Chambers writing on these public theatres says that they brought together bad characters. Like the bawdyhouses they appeared to have been at the mercy of traditional rowdiness.

The theatre was a democratic institution in an intensely un-democratic age. Apprentices and servants were drawn to the theatre as the nobles were.

The Elizabethans had a very real fear of the potentialities of a crowd. So the theatres seemed to them perfect places for contrivers of treason and for other idle and dangerous persons to meet together. They felt that the performance diverted the workers and apprentices from their labour in the factories. Puritans condemned the playhouse audiences as "the great beast, the monster of many heads". It is reasonable to conclude that most of the uncharitable comments on the nature of the Shakespeare's audience came form disappointed poets, disgruntled preachers, wary politicians and guildsmen.

5.6.1 Theatrical Attendance

By the time Shakespeare began staging his plays, there were two major classes of permanent Elizabethan play-houses designated "public" and "private". The audience who frequented these "public" playhouses were described in Shakespeare's own day as "multitudes" and "swarms". The Elizabethans said that the theatres were pestered by people coming from all corners of the land who "assembled in heaps"

The four London theatres in 1596 were *The Theatre*, *The Curtain*, *The Rose* and *The Swan*.

In 1599, theatrical activity got an impetus with the revival of the boys companies. The boys companies in those days were organized professional troupes of young boys who gave public performances outside the court. Five companies were active during the second decade of Shakespeare's theatrical

career. Professor Alfred Harbage arrives at the following figures as the average theatrical attendance in Shakespeare's day. It was 2500 a day or 15000, a week in 1595, about 3000 a day or 18000 a week in 1601, about 3500 a day or 21,000 a week in 1605. The audience derived quick and frequent changes of theatrical fare. Attendance was good in summer and early autumn gradually diminishing as the cold weather set in, then rising to a peak in the pleasant days of spring.

5.6.2 The Composition of the audience

The audience that gathered in the "public" playhouses like The *Globe* represented almost every element in London's immensely varied population. The fee charged was small. The bulk of the typical audience was made up of shopkeepers, craftsmen, and other persons in the lower income groups. These were called the 'groundlings'. They stood on the three sides of the protruding wooden stage and watched the play. And they were in no sense an undisciplined rabble. Though they appreciated horse play, bawdry, and rude farce they were at the same time capable of appreciating great poetry.

They liked excitement, the open exhibition of violent and bloody deeds; they had a special fondness for the most prominent noise, rant, mere bawdry, irrelevant songs, jokes, dances and clownings in general and lastly duels and battles.

Shakespeare never resisted the wishes of his audience. He gave what it wanted; but in doing so gave it what it never dreamt of. It liked tragedy to be relieved by rough mirth and it got the grave-diggers in *Hamlet* and the old countryman in *Antony and Cleopatra*. It liked a "drum and trumpet" history and it got *Henry V*. It liked clowns or fools and it got Feste, and the Fool in *King Lear*.

The gentry in the audience include professional men, attendants at the court or in noble households, and lesser gentlemen. These were the occupants of the two-and-three penny seats in the galleries. Earls and other great lords often occupied conspicuous seats on the stage in the 12-penny rooms.

Women, not merely "light" women but the respectable wives and daughters of ordinary tradesmen, attended the London theatres as a matter of course. The evidence establishing this fact is overwhelming. Foreign visitors to London during the year in which Shakespeare wrote his plays remark with some surprise that "women-folk" and many "respectable women" attended the theatre without scruple.

Check Your Progress Questions

9. What is Edmund Chambers' comment on public theatres?

10. What is the comment of Puritans on the playhouse audience?

11. What were the four London theatres in 1596?

12. How many companies were active during the 2nd decade of his theatrical career?

13. In which season was the audience in peak?

The crowd was heterogeneous, yet on the whole intelligent. A typical audience of this size was probably not so badly behaved as described by Puritan enemies of the stage have led many modern historians to believe. There were many cutpurses among the audience. Some prostitutes certainly attended the theatres and occasionally solicited customers. But the insinuation of some Puritan writers that an Elizabethan theatre was a kind of ante-room to a house of assignation is mere slander.

5.6.3 Audience behaviour

Judged by modern standards, Elizabethan audience were very demonstrative. There is much evidence to show that they wept unashamedly at pathetic or stirring scenes. Nashe reports that the "tears of ten thousand spectators" were called forth by the death of the brave warrior Talbot, in *Henry V Part I.* Laughter and applause were also unrestrained. Shouts of approval or expressions of violent displeasure such as catcalls and hisses frequently interrupted the action and the speeches. We may now examine how the plays were influenced by the audience.

Dramatists by and large are people who live to please and must please to live; so Shakespeare and his fellows were constantly forced to remember the many in their audience who were not even literate. And the literates ranged from those who had acquired just enough to read to those who had gone into the lower forms of grammar schools. Those who could read fluently read some of the voluminous literature which poured from the London presses and this literature had a strong rhetorical basis. Even the illiterates by constant listening to sermons, proclamations, addresses of welcome, official speeches and the like, were accustomed to certain rhetorical devices. A part of the audience readily responded to the language of the drama which often put things in verse or spoke in images, figures and allegorical forms.

Check Your Progress Questions

14. Who were the typical audience?
15 What were the expectations of groundlings?
16. Who occupied two or three penny seats?
17. Were there women audience?
18. Which coarsened the feelings of audience?

Far more important and deep-seated than the educational background of the audience were the sights and scenes of London life which had great impact on the sensitiveness of the audience. Rich and poor alike were brought up amidst these sights and scenes of London life. *The Hope Theatre* which saw dramatic performances on some days of the week also saw bearbaiting on others. Opposite *the Globe* stood the bear-pit. The Elizabethans also witnessed the horrid

ceremonial of death, the physical cruelties at the gallows or the pillory. The daily incitements to violence provoked them to lusty, throaty cries such as "up Fish Street! down St. Magnus coner! Kill and knock down! Throw them in the Thames!". All these in general coarsened their feelings and all sense of pity in them got choked. Every section of the audience was coarse and hardened and they demanded violence and blood. It was to meet such demands that the eyes of Gloucester were put out on the stage and Macduff entered the stage with Macbeth's head. The innumerable scenes of violence both of word and deed, the passion of an Othello, the mad rage of a Leontes or a Lear were part of the response of the dramatists to something in themselves as well as in their audience that cried out for satisfaction.

In the most inward and mysterious of his plays, *Hamlet*, Shakespeare gave the public plenty that they could not understand but he made up for it in several violent scenes in the first and the last Acts. As if in derision of his cultured critics, Shakespeare has thrown out every stimulant of popular excitement: five deaths on the open stage, three appearances of a ghost, two of a mad woman, a dumb-show: two men raving and fighting in a grave at a funeral, the skulls and bones of the dead and a litter of corpses. And yet out of this sensational material he made the most mysterious and inward of his dramas, which teases our mind beyond thought. In this strange harmony of discords, surely unexampled before or since, we may see at a glance the essence of Elizabethan drama, of its poets, playwrights and of its audience.

Shakespeare's public also dearly loved to see soldiers combat and battles on the stage. And if we examine Shakespeare's battle we shall observe a certain peculiarity. In most cases he does not give a picture of two whole armies engaged but makes a pair of combatants rush upon the stage fight and rush off again, and the pair is succeeded by a second and perhaps by the third. The Elizabethan playgoers went to see performances like a fencing match, a broad sword fight and target fight just as we in the modern times go to see cricket or football matches. The Elizabethan audience could judge of the merit of the exhibition when Hotspur and Prince Henry fought, when Macduff "laid on" or when Tybalt and Mercutio used their rapiers. This was probably the reason why Shakespeare's battles so often consist of single combats. Further this hurried series of single combats admitted of martial speeches.

The Elizabethans were exceedingly fond of music. Every respectable household had its own stock of musical instruments and the owner delighted in entertaining guests with songs and music. Shakespeare's plays as well as the plays of other Elizabethan dramatists provided plenty of occasion for music and song. In Shakespeare the songs are dramatically justifiable and so they are never out of place in the scene. The practice of accompanying certain speeches by low music had also the sanction of Shakespeare and his audience.

For example, music was played while the lovely opening lines of *Twelfth Night* were being spoken. Some lines of Lorenzo's amorous speech about music in the *Merchant of Venice* were spoken to the accompaniment of music. There is a more conspicuous instance of music accompanying the scene where Lear wakes from his long sleep and sees Cordelia standing by his side.

The audience loved to hear other musical sounds too. Almost always the ceremonial entrance of a royal person is marked by the "inflourish" all trumpets, cornets, or hautboys; and wherever we have armies, and battles we find stage direction for drums or trumpets. It is evident that the audience loved these sounds which stimulated their excitement or sometimes heightened the impression of grandeur or awe.

Misconceptions are prevalent concerning the intellectual and artistic attainments of the Elizabethan noblemen. One suspects that he is often patterned in the images of Sir Phillip Sidney, endowed with the qualities found in his works. But as a matter of fact the gentry were no paragons of deportment. Johnson's complaints are not at groundlings but at the capricious gallants who pretended to dislike all things. They do not confine themselves to a display of ennui; they exhaust human ingenuity in becoming an active nuisance. They used to arrive late, sit on the stage, laugh aloud, tickle the ear of the neighbour with a straw and make a noisy exit. They used to make faces, spit and cry 'filthy, filthy'

Check Your Progress Questions

19. What was the demand of the audience?

20. In which acts, violent scenes can be found?

21. Who makes the nuisance in Johnson's opinion?

5.6.4 Elizabethan appraisals

Gossen says that Shakespeare was not confronted with cold spectators. "The longer we gaze, the more we crave, the afterward being but thought upon, they make us seek for the like, another time".

Dekker highlights the fact that tragedy was welcomed by the audience provided poetry was there to save the play from "killing the hearer's heart". Spectators were thus delighted by "sweet words equally balanced".

There is another writer who complains that there can be found no stronger engine to batter the honesty of wedded wives and the chastity of unmarried maids and widows than the hearing of common plays and taking pity on the deceitful tears of stage lovers. Prof Alfred Martson points out the widespread ability of the audience to quote from the plays which proves the attentiveness of the spectator.

He writes, he toils, he jests, courts what not
And all from out his huge long scraped stock
of well penn 'd plays

These appraisals make clear to us that Shakespeare's audience was quite attentive; it had the, capacity for enjoyment, it had a high emotional susceptibility; it loved even tragedies to contain sweet words equally balanced; it was quite responsive. But about their sense of discrimination contradictory opinions prevail.

Thus Gossen in his more severe mood classified all playgoers as the worst sort of people. Dekker lashes out at the commoner of the pit as the stinkards. Ben Jonson inveighs against the nobles also as "fastidious impertinents" and "capricious gallants".

Out of the welter of comments upon the audience emerges one amusing fact. The most successful writers were the least critical of the spectators' powers of discrimination. Shakespeare could by and large come to terms with his audience though he too had moment of disgust with his own profession. In his *Sonnets* Shakespeare lets fall a few words of discontent; He has "sold cheap what is most dear and fortune has provided for him only "public means which public manners breed" and his nature, "like the dyer's hand" is stained by wh t works on inspite of his disgust finding vent here and there. Shakesp considers his spectators"gentles all". They are addressed pleasantly, unassumingly and respectfully.

5.6.5. Modern Appraisals

W.W. Lawrence says hat Shakespeare provided for the more intellectual spectators something which the groundlings with their imperfect mentality and defective education could not perceive. Such modern appraisals seem to be too

facile in their generalization. The rank and file of the sixteenth century had a manifest interest in self-instruction and so the penny playgoers of London cannot be regarded as "nine-tenths illiterate". No doubt for the groundlings books, candles and daylight leisure were all hard to come by. Still London "Society was by no means an illiterate society" according to the careful investigations made by Adamson.

The most ignorant modern charges against Shakespeare's audience is that it was primitive, brutal and in some way spiritually debased. The assault on the grounds of spiritual and moral depravity was made by Robert Bridges.

"Shakespeare should not be put into the hands of the young without the warning that the foolish things in his plays are for the foolish, the filthy for the filthy and the brutal for the brutal".

Miss Byrne basing her arguments upon certain Elizabethan institutions maintains that there was among the Elizabethans a strong vein of brutality and insensitiveness to physical suffering.

The audience of Shakespeare lacked the tremendous divisions and distractions of the modern age. But what was available to them was the balm and marvel of words provided by the dramas. The theatres opened wide vistas of mind to them and they offered lessons in Education and History.

Professor Harbage concludes that we must assume that our three Elizabethan spectators of the cockney family - the grocer, his wife and their young apprentice - were intensely interested in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as they were all feeling quite easy in the company of audibles art which to them constituted both entertainment and education.

5.7. Questions

1. Write a note on Shakespearean Audience
2. Write a note on Elizabethan Stage

5.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. Public and Private **2.** The Swan, Globe **3.** Front stage, Inner Stage, Upper Stage, Back stage **4.** Dialogue. **5.** To imagine an equivalent of what the author had himself imagined and written. **6.** Men and boys

7. No **8.** De Witt **9.** They brought together bad characters. **10.** 'the great beast, the monster of many heads'
11. The theatre, The curtain, The Rose, The Swan. **12.** 5
13. Spring **14.** Groundlings **15.** open exhibition of violent and bloody deeds, noise, rant, mere bawdry, irrelevant songs, jokes, dances, clownings, duels and battles. **16.** professional men, attendants at the court, or in noble households, and lesser gentlemen. **17.** yes
18. bear-baiting. **19.**violent scenes, battles, single combats and music.
20.first and last acts **21.** the capricious gallants.

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UNIT – 6 A

Space for Hints

SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY

6.1 Introduction

Romantic Comedy's universal appeal is to be explained by the fact that the basis of this comedy (transformation of a sad beginning to a happy ending) is indeed the basis of the universe itself, the basis of ultimate reality. It is only in the light of this ultimate, truth that we can understand why Dante called his great poem "The Divine Comedy". It tells of journey beginning in Hell, passing through Chaos and finally culminating in Heaven.

6.2 Unit Objectives

- To analyse the uniqueness of Shakespeare's comedies
- To evaluate the subject matter of his Comedies

6.3. Structure

6.1. Introduction

6.2. Unit Objectives

6.3. Structure

6.4 Types of Comedy

6.5 Uniqueness of his comedies

6.6 Subject Matter

6.7 Characteristics of Romantic comedies

6.8 Questions

6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.10 Further Reading

6.4 Types of Comedy

From the time of the Greeks there have been two different streams of comedy, two different theories of comic form. It is the temperament of the writer that decides which of the two forms he will make his own. Ben Jonson in English and Moliere in French are fine examples of writers of the first of these types of comedy, namely Satiric comedy. Shakespeare is the greatest writer of the second type of comedy namely, Romantic comedy

Satiric comedy is no laughing matter. It has a strictly moral purpose. It pours ridicule on the foibles and minor vices of man and follows contempt with chastisement. Foibles are persecuted. Vicious men are punished fittingly. The characters in this type of comedy are fops, cheats, the newly rich, bullies and braggarts, pedants and loose women. Love finds no place in these plays.

Romantic comedy, on the other hand, deals with kings, queens, princes, lords, ladies, merchants, middle and low characters, lovable rogues, good humoured sluts, everyone of whom has something good about him or her, and is capable of a generous impulse. Their dangers are commonly not serious, not pressing. Their acts lead to happy conclusions. Love is the ruling force in this type of comedy.

Satiric comedy, such as what the Greek Aristophanes wrote was a bitter comedy, whose sole purpose was to pour scorn and ridicule on the vices of mankind and pursues them with punishment. This type of comedy became suddenly prominent during the Renaissance. To Aristophanes comedy was an instrument of social ethics and its business was to show men of foibles and vices being punished so as to deter man from imitating such characters.

The gentler type of comedy, such as what Diomeds and Doratus wrote, told love stories, talked of town-dwelling and private persons. Such a comedy tells the people what is useful in life and what is to be avoided. In Menander's plays there is no bitterness, but they represent all sorts of agreeable mistakes made by ordinary men. This type of comedy became popular in the Middle Ages, and Shakespeare follows their tradition in English.

Comedy is the exact opposite of tragedy. While tragedy deals with the sudden fall from prosperity of the heroes, comedy transforms a sad beginning into a happy ending. It tells a tale of trouble that turns to joy. Tragedy deals with the deeper problems and issues of life, while comedy considers only the surface - the superficial aspect of life.

6.5 Uniqueness of his comedies

Shakespeare's Romantic comedy is different from its prototype in Greek and Roman times in that - it suppresses the satiric element altogether, stresses the romantic element and makes Love (of little importance in former ages) the only begetter of the true vision of Reality.

Shakespeare eschews the comedy of manners, domestic comedy, also called the comedy of intrigue, and satiric comedy which is satirical in treatment and didactic in purpose. His may be called a comedy of life. It is simply a gay, sweet, high spirited play in which the foibles and follies of men are portrayed against the great background of the spiritual kinship and great destiny of mankind.

6.6 Subject Matter

Shakespearean comedy, generally speaking, has the subject-matter of Romance that is to say, in spite of its obvious improbable situations and absurd incidents and its half serious nature it demands from us complete sympathy and insist on being taken seriously. There are many occasions in a comedy when the foolish and absurd actions of men are held up to ridicule, but this is in strict subordination to purposes of Romance.

Shakespearean comedy deals with life under idealised and artistic conditions so that it becomes properly a subject for treatment in dramatic art. Mirth, laughter and marriage are the chief characteristics of comedy. If mirth and laughter are raised by mere incidents, the play would be a farce. In a comedy, men and women of different minds and characters meet in the incidents on daily life and from the clash and contention of these minds, are aroused mirth and laughter.

Tragedy purges our emotions through pity and terror. In tragedy life is raised to a noble height and we are awed and attracted by the picture of a heroic soul rising to sublime heights of grandeur and sublimity even in its defeat and destruction.

On the other hand comedy portrays actual life, and, by contrasting it with the ideal life, exposes its littleness and futility by exposing it to the light of imagination and poetry. Every sort of weakness in man, his vanity, complacency, greed, foolish jealousy, excessive interest in himself, credulity, is laid bare. And the floodgates of laughter burst on the mind of the spectator with a cleansing and purifying effect.

Shakespeare's early attempts at comedy *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew* cannot be called squarely romantic comedies, but already in them we find Shakespeare's imagination and invention turning the stolid fun of the Roman originals into the fantasy of Middle Ages. In the first play the introduction of the improbable abbess (not to be found in the original) turns the catastrophe

Check Your Progress Questions

1. Who is the first writer of Satiric Comedy in French?
2. Who is the first writer of satiric comedy in French?
3. Who is the greatest writer of Romantic comedy in English?
4. What are the two different streams of comedy?
5. In which type of comedy love finds no place?

into general joy; in the second, Katherine senses the true affection of Petruchio, surrenders to him and wins a happy marriage.

6.7 Characteristics of Romantic comedies:

Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies have the following essential feaures:

1. Love is the central fact of his comedies. Love is a passion kindling heart, brain and senses alike in happy and natural proportions, ardent but not sensual, tender but not sentimental pure but not ascetic, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. (In his comedies mere "sensual passion is always subordinated to love that ennobles and elevates the human mind) People fall in love at the first sight, and, after passing through a lot of sufferings and overcoming obstacles, finally marry and live a life of happiness forever. Most comedies, of Shakespeare end in multiple marriages. Cupid shoots his arrows not only on kings, queens, lords and ladies but also on clowns and peasants.

2. Women constitute the very soul of a Shakespearean comedy. It was Ruskin who aptly remarked after having studied the pivotal roles they play, that there are no heroes at all; there are only heroines. George Gordon observes; "All lectures on Shakespeare's comedies tend to become features on Shakespeare's women for in the comedies they have the front of the stage". His heroines are all more sparkling and lively than their male counterparts. Bassanio does not come to the level of Portia; Benedick pales behind the witty Beatrice; Orsino has no comparison with Viola and Orlando, with the charming Rosalind.

3. Strange, wonderful, remote and unfamiliar incidents and situations abound in it; Improbability is the essence of the story; it does not result from comic exaggeration; it is the result of pure Romance.

4. The scene of action is far away from the dull and dreary world of everyday life. Thebes, Illyria, Venice and Arden forest are not to be located with the help of a geographical map. These places are bathed in the light of romantic splendour and romantic fancy and they lessen the impression of improbability. Even when the scene is most real it is still Utopian. In Venice one can get money by pledging a pound of one's flesh. Padua, Verona, and other Italian cities are the Worldly Paradise where a Lucentio might hopefully look for 'love in idleness'.

5. It is not however altogether romantic. The Shakespearean world is a successful blending of realism and imagination. Gordon rightly says: "It is in his power over these two worlds, in his ostensible, alternations between Nowhere and England, that Shakespeare's romantic comedies excel all others". *The Merchant of Venice* opens on a real public mart but concludes at Belmont where the atmosphere is shot with mystery and romance. As we have extremely romantic characters like Orlando and Orsino, we have also extremely realistic characters like Launcelot, Gobbo, Malvolio and Bully Bottom.

6. Shakespeare differs from other comic dramatists of the classical times, his own times and from our own times in that he deals with high life and not with old men, slaves and courtesans of humble rank and obscure places.

7. Humour is yet another ingredient of a Shakespearean comedy. Unlike his contemporary Ben Jonson, Shakespeare does not ridicule human foibles and defects. This is a genial humour without a corrective aim. Dowden observes: "The genial laughter of Shakespeare at human absurdity is free from even the admirable cynicism which gives to the humour of Jane Austen a certain piquant flavour. It is like the play of summer lightning, which hurts no living creature, but surprises, illuminates and charms". It is through the fools and the clowns that he achieves this impossible feat. Touchstone is a wise fool and he provides wit that appeals to our intellect. Feste is more jovial and vulgar.

Check Your Progress Questions

6 _____ is the gentler type of comedy?

7. What are the chief characteristics of comedy?

8. What is the subject matter of Shakespearean comedy?

9. Who remarked "Shakespeare has no heroes but only heroines in his comedy"?

8. It tells a story of life seriously; there are a number of checks on the lovers, and many trying complications in their way; but there is always a happy ending.

9. Variety in characterisation, in theme and in interest is obtained by setting many secondary plots along with the main plot. Unlike Greene and other playwrights who followed the same practices, Shakespeare succeeds in interweaving skillfully many different stories in his comedies.

10. Character and construction of the play are inseparable. That is, Shakespeare's delineation of character is what gives permanent value to his art. There are complex moods and subtle characters in his comedies.

11. Men and women of different degrees of worth and worthlessness are found in the plays, but each of them receives some sympathy from the reader; the essentially noble, evenly balanced and well proportioned types naturally get the most sympathy. Shakespeare's purpose is not to instruct or improve; but the

contemplation of character and the unravelling of plot gives us artistic and ethical pleasure.

12. Shakespeare recreates the 'golden world' which poets sing about. The countryside plays significant part in his comedies, from *Midsummer Night's Dream* through *As you like it*, to *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

6.8. Questions

1. What are the characteristics of Shakespearean comedy?
2. What are the types of comedy?

6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. Ben Jonson 2.Moliere 3. Shakespeare 4. Satiric, Romantic Comedy
5. Satiric comedy 6. Romantic Comedy 7.Mirth,laughter and marriage
8. Romance 9.Benjonson

6.10 Further Reading

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Space for H nts

UNIT – 6B

SHASKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

6.1 Introduction

A.C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* published in 1905 is still the greatest critical study of Shakespeare's great tragedies. Subsequent research and criticism have added to our appreciation and understanding of these plays. We find that Bradley was mistaken in certain matters, but in the main his views are still the final on the subject.

6.2 Unit Objectives

- To make the students understand Character is destiny
- To evaluate Tragic waste and tragic trait

6.3. Structure

6.1. Introduction

6.2. Unit Objectives

6.3. Structure

6.4 Characteristics

6.4.1 Tragic Hero

6.4.2 Greek in design

6.4.3 Character is destiny

6.4.4 Other features

6.4.5 Human wickedness

6.4.6 Conflict

6.4.7 Tragic trait

6.4.8 Tragic Waste

6.4.9 Fate

6.4.10 Purgation

6.5 Questions

6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.7 Further Reading

6.4 Characteristics

Bradley made a careful study of the four greatest tragedies of Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear* and deduced the following characteristics of Shakespearean tragedy.

6.4.1 Tragic Hero

A Shakespearean tragedy is pre-eminently the story of one person-The four great tragedies are of this sort. Sometimes it tells the story of two equally important persons - for instance the love tragedies of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* Mainly the tragedy is a single star play.

It is a story which leads upto and includes the death of the hero. It is a tale of suffering and calamity which ends in death.

Shakespeare's tragic heroes are 'men of high state' and 'noble status'. Richard II & III are kings; Romeo and Timon are of aristocratic birth; Coriolanus and Titus are generals; Brutus is highly placed and Antony is more than a king, an emperor: Macbeth and Othello are generals; Lear is a King and Hamlet a prince.

Another feature that brings them close is that they are in the afternoon of life and not the 'unbaked and doughy youths' of the Dark Comedies. Neither the youthful vigour nor the exuberance of the romantic heroes is found in them. For, Macbeth 'has fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf, and Othello has declined in age'; King Lear is an octogenerian and Hamlet though not about thirty, is completely sick of life.

There is, however a moral order in his tragedies The villains have to pay the penalty for their wickedness. Claudius the fractricide dies: Iago is tortured to death. All the three villainous characters in *Lear* perish. Richard III has to die for he is essentially a villain.

His tragic heroes are all lonely figures. They have no friends who can plumb the depths of their minds. Even their wives cannot do so.

In a Shakespearean tragedy the hero dies, and so does the heroine. Romeo dies as does Juliet. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth die. Lear and Cordelia die. Antony and Cleopatra too die.

The sufferings are exceptional and they befall a conspicuous person. They are of a striking nature, unexpected, and are contrasted with previous happiness. Stories of common men, slowly worn to death by disease, poverty, vice or

persecution, however piteous or dreadful, are not tragic in the Shakespearean sense.

The calamity is not confined to one man (the hero): it must spread far and wide making the whole scene one of woe. The fate of the hero "affects the welfare of a whole nation or empire, and when he falls suddenly from the height of earthly greatness to the dust, his fall produces a sense of contrast of the powerlessness of man and of the omnipotence perhaps the caprice of fortune or fate, which no tale of private life can possibly rival" (A.C.Bradley)

6.4.2 Greek in design

In the ancient and the medieval mind, tragedy meant a total reversal of fortunes befalling a man in high degree, happy and apparently secure. What Gloucester says,

Like flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods.
They kill us for their sport.

is applicable to the medieval tragedy but not to Shakespeare's.

In a Greek tragedy the plot is of paramount importance. The ancient playwrights paid scant attention to develop the character of the protagonists. Their main concern was to combine the action of the plot to a single day an imposition by the unity of Time. In a Shakespearean tragedy on the other hand, the character of the hero is of supreme importance.

Check Your Progress Questions

1.What are the four greatest tragedies of Shakespeare?
2 ____ is the greatest critical study of Shakespeare's great tragedies
3 ____ are the love tragedies of Shakespeare?
4.Is there a moral order in his tragedies?
5 Can anyone plumb the depths of heros' minds?

The Greek tragedies were steeped in religious tone. Sins, violence and horror were scrupulously left out; a Greek tragedy also struck a note of serenity. All this cannot be said of a Shakespearean tragedy.

Unlike a Shakespearean tragedy a Greek tragedy was highly rhetorical and poetical.

It cannot altogether be said that Shakespearean tragedies are ungreek. At least in certain respects, by making the heroes men of high state, his tragedies are fundamentally Greek in design.

6.4.3 Character is destiny

In the medieval tragedies, man is destroyed but not defeated. It frightened men and awed them. In Shakespeare's tragedies the calamities do not simply happen; they proceed from the actions of men. A number of human beings are placed in particular circumstance; the cooperation of their characters in these circumstances gives rise to certain actions; these actions to others. These series of

interconnected deeds, are led by apparently inevitable sequence to a catastrophe. We feel that the characters have brought these calamities upon themselves. Certainly it is so in the case of the hero who contributes in some measure to the disaster in which he perishes. He is the author of his proper woe. These deeds issue from his character, and are not done unconsciously or in half-consciousness between sleep and wakefulness. Character issues in deeds and deeds result in calamities. To say that "character is destiny" in Shakespeare may be an exaggeration, but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth.

6.4.4 Other features

Shakespeare, occasionally represents 1) abnormal conditions of mind, such as insanity, somnambulism, hallucination etc.- but these are never introduced by Shakespeare as the origin of deeds of any dramatic importance 2) the supernatural element such as witches and ghosts. The three witches in *Macbeth* and the ghost of Hamlet's father motivate the action of the plot of the respective plays. The supernatural machinery bears a close relation with character and thus remains an indispensable part of a Shakespearean tragedy. Once again these forces do not originate anything and their influence is not of the compulsive kind for they merely confirm what is already present in the hero's mind 3) an accident or chance, playing havoc at some point in the action. Stopford A Brooke and a few suggest that some of the tragedies of Shakespeare are due to mere chance and accident than to fate. It is by accident that Desdemona dropped her handkerchief but it proves fatal to her. Its operation being a prominent fact of human life cannot be altogether omitted from a play which is a representation of real life. Shakespeare uses accident sparingly.

To chance, accident and responsibility (of the hero) must be added the villain whose contribution to the ruin of the hero is not negligible. George Meredith summarily rejects the role of the villain by observing:

In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be, passions spin the plot;
We are betrayed by what is false within.

But Shakespeare was deeply absorbed in the problem of evil and his villains symbolised the spirit of evil forces.

6.4.5 Human wickedness

A tragedy is a story of exceptional calamity, leading to the death of a man in high estate; it is the story of human actions producing exceptional calamity and ending in the death of such a man.

Grierson and Smith rightly observe: What drags these heroes down to suffering and death?

"Not blind fate, nor the jealousy of the gods, not some ancestral curse or hereditary taint - these ideas are foreign to Shakespeare - but simply human wickedness, the human will to evil, the corruption of man's heart. The evil which makes tragedy, springs not from the lusts of the flesh but from the lust of power. It is lust of power that makes Claudius a fratricide, makes Iago 'plume up his will', by torturing Othello, and turns Goneril and Regan into monsters. The callous cruelty that the lust of power begets, not only horrifies Shakespeare, it amazes him.

6.4.6 Conflict

The tragic action is a conflict - ordinarily between two persons of whom the hero is one; sometimes between two parties or groups, in one of which the hero is the leading figure; or again between two kinds of passions or ideas animating such persons or groups.

Conflict, both external and internal is the crux of a Shakespearean tragedy. His tragic heroes are torn asunder between alternatives and their hearts are in a state of excruciating agony. The soul of the hero is at war with itself. In *Macbeth,* the external conflict is between Macbeth and Macduff, the inner conflict is between his vaulting ambition and his conscience. "In *King Lear* there are clearly marked groups of characters hanging themselves respectively under the banners of Right and Wrong or of Good and Evil, and the clash of these two groups, introduces a thrilling outer conflict; but the inner struggle again, is to be discovered in the mind of Lear alone". Hamlet takes up arms against his uncle Polonius and Laertes. Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* is torn between Egypt and Rome, between love and duty.

A Shakespearean tragedy may roughly be divided into three parts. In the first part the state of affairs out of which the conflict arises is expounded; it is termed Exposition and it covers mostly the scenes in the first act. The second part deals with the definite beginning the growth and the vicissitudes of the conflict. It

forms the bulk of the play comprising the second, third and fourth acts. The final section shows the issue of the conflict in a Catastrophe.

6.4.7 Tragic trait

The tragic trait in a Shakespearean tragic hero is a marked one-sidedness, a predisposition in some particular direction, a marked bias. The hero shows a total incapacity in certain circumstances of resisting the force drawing him in that direction. He shows a fatal tendency to identify the whole thing with one interest, object, passion or habit of mind. This is for Shakespeare the fundamental tragic trait.

The tragic hero finds himself in just those circumstances in which his tragic trait is fatal to him. His action of failing to act is an error which combined with other causes brings on him ruin. The tragic hero with Shakespeare is generally 'good' but not always so. If he is good, he wins our sympathy at once for his error. But always the hero must have so much of greatness that in his error and fall we are conscious of the possibilities of human nature. We never close a Shakespearean tragedy with the feeling that man is a poor creature. His lot may be heart-rending and mysterious, but it is never contemptible.

6.4.8 Tragic waste

The essential tragic impression is one of waste. We see everywhere power, intelligence, life and glory which astound us and seem to call our worship, and everywhere we find them perishing, devouring one another and destroying themselves, often accompanied by terrific pain and anguish. Of this mystery of life, tragedy might be said to be the typical form; the greatness which tragedy exhibits fighting, devouring and ultimately itself destroyed is the highest form of existence we can conceive of. Tragedy makes us realise forcefully the worth of that which is wasted and we can only marvel at the mystery of life.

What is the ultimate power that rules the world? Shakespearean drama is almost wholly secular. Shakespeare was probably a protestant Christian, though a few believe that he was an ardent Catholic; there are naturally many references to Christ the Redeemer in his plays; but the world presented in the plays is a world of non-theological observation and thought. Shakespeare presents to us a tragic fate that is something piteous, fearful and mysterious. Unlike Pagan tragedy, Shakespearean tragedy does not leave us crushed, rebellious or desperate. At the same time Shakespeare does not envisage a benignant God who will ultimately

Check Your Progress Questions

6.In which play of Shakespeare, three witches appear?

7.The crux of a Shakespearean tragedy is ____

8.As Shakespeare is a Christian, there are many reference to ____ in his plays

forgive us and bestow on us immortal bliss. In that case the suffering and waste could not seem to be so fearful and mysterious as it does. Indeed with the belief in Christianity, tragedy lost the mystery and terror which it had in pagan times.

Again Shakespeare does not believe the ultimate power to be Fate, whether blind and indifferent to man, or positively cruel and malicious; in that case also the spectacle would leave us desperate or rebellious.

6.4.9 Fate

We feel that in a Shakespearean tragedy the hero is a man fated to destruction and death, and that he is carried away by an irresistible flood to destruction. We feel that though he is not free from faults, is not the sole or sufficient cause of his destruction. For instance, Brutus meant well and killed his friend Caesar to save democracy in Rome but the end of all his efforts was to bring about civil war in Rome and death to him and his friends. Hamlet rightly hesitates to take revenge on his uncle, but to what end? He kills many persons whom he had never intended to harm, and at the end kills the uncle whom he could not at first bring himself to kill. Man therefore seems to be helpless before a superior force. Is it Fate? If so, it is very different from Fate as the Greek writers of tragedy conceived it. To the Greeks, Fate was the will of the gods and showed itself as a special spite - in a crude, primitive form - against a family or an individual for some hideous crime or impiety which ultimately brought about the downfall and death of an individual and his descendants. In Greek drama, fate is nemesis (punishment) to hubris (pride which leads to disrespect to the gods). In Shakespeare Fate is the mythological expression for the whole system or order which governs the world and individuals. This system is the ultimate power governing this world.

But this is only one side of the picture. On the other side, we find that the hero's voluntary action is the main cause of destruction. The action is bad or wrong and its recoil on the hero is the catastrophe. We feel that the hero deserves to be punished, but we also feel that the punishment is excessive. Tragedy is a terrible story. There is no poetic justice in Shakespeare's tragedies. The villain is always punished, but many an innocent person is also destroyed along with him. Cordelia's death in *King Lear* is something which generations of playgoers have not been able to reconcile themselves to. Happiness and misery are never apportioned according to merit.

Destruction and death are never produced by what is good in a man. However, this good is always found in combination with some marked flaw or imperfection in the hero - haste, ambition, irresolution, pride, credulity etc. and it is this evil in the comparatively innocent hero which causes the ultimate destruction.

Evil seems to exist everywhere, in the mind of man, and in the outside world. It shows itself to be always something negative, weakening and destructive. Evil brings about disunity, isolation and at first destroys what is good, but finally annihilates itself.

To conclude, Shakespeare does not attempt to justify the ways of God to man: at the same time he does not believe in all powerful Fate which determines the course of any action. In his plays the world is always striving for perfection, but seems to throw up both glorious good and an inexplicable evil which the former is able to overcome only ultimately and at the cost of much self-torture and self-waste.

6.4.10 Purgation

Aristotle studying the Greek tragedies of his time said that tragedy is the imitation of an action and that through "pity and terror, effects the purgation of these emotions". Pity is roused when we see an essentially noble soul suffering disproportionately for a small fault of his. We feel terror when we think that we have a character not different from the heroes, and that placed in similar circumstance we might have recourse to the same course of action as the hero and might be ruined like him. We say, "There but for the grace of God go!".

Again, men have misguided feelings of pity and foolish terrors. Great tragic plays help them to get rid of stupid feelings and teach them to pity and fear proper things. What Aristotle said of Greek tragedies applies to Shakespeare's tragic plays. Bradley does not say enough about Shakespeare's variety of conception. He confines himself to a study of the four major tragedies. For instance, *Henry VI* is a tragedy of wavering groups, not individuals.

The King Richard III in the play of the same name has only tragic flaws and not a single good quality about him.

Richard II is the tragedy of a weak tyrant. This king is Shakespeare's first introspective hero. *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragedy of Fate, but not in the Greek's sense. Some call it a tragedy of rashness, but it depends too much on chance.

Julius Caesar is again a tragedy of groups without a single hero. It is a tragedy of pity rather than terror.

Irving Ribner in his 'Patterns in Shakespearean Tragedy' recognises an affinity of victory in tragedy to religious experience. After tracing the close relation which tragedy has maintained by the religious experience both in Greece and in England he asserts: "Just as Adam inspite of his fall from Paradise, had by the grace of God been given the knowledge by means of which he might eventually overcome evil, the Shakespearean tragic hero through the process of his destruction, may learn the nature of evil and thus attain a spiritual victory inspite of death".

Ribner redefines Aristotle's 'Katharsis' by calling tragedy a social art form and as such he says there must be reconciliation. He feels that inspite of the fate of the tragic heroes, society must at the end of each tragedy, undergo a symbolic rebirth. He points out that there is always Fortinbras (Hamlet), Edgar (Lear) or Malcom (Macbeth) ready to begin life with a renewed hope in the future. This final sense of reconciliation he calls, an essential ingredient of tragedy and says that by 'Katharsis'. Aristotle must have meant this.

6.5 Questions

1. Write a note on Shakespearean tragedy?
2. Write down the characteristics of Shakespearean tragedy

6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and King Lear **2.**A.C.Bradley's *Shakespearean tragedy* **3.**Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra **4.** Yes **5.**No **6.***Macbeth* **7.**External and internal conflict **8.** Christ the Redeemer **9.** fate **10.**No **11.** destruction **12.**a symbolic rebirth

6.7 Further Reading

Felperin, Howard. *Shakespearean Representation: Memesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Nevo, Ruth. *Tragic Form in Shakespeare*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.

UNIT – 7 A

HISTORY PLAYS

Space for Hints

7.1 Introduction

Shakespeare's history plays mark a stage in the development of his mind and art. In his histories, he is mainly interested in the world of practical affairs and so his characters in the historical plays are conceived chiefly with reference to action. In his historical plays, Shakespeare deals with the problem of man's success or failure in this world.

7.2. Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- The Characteristics of Shakespeare's history plays
- Shakespeare's treatment of history
- Shakespeare's plot construction

7.3. Unit Structure

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Unit Objectives
7.3. Unit Structure
7.4. Sources
7.5. Characteristics
7.6. His treatment of history
7.7. Disorder
7.8. Divine Right Theory
7.9. Patriotism
7.10 Nemesis
7.11. Long History of 350 Years
7.12. Plot Construction
7.13. Summing Up
7.14 Questions
7.15 Answers to Check Your Progress
7.16 Further Reading

7.4. Sources

For his English History plays, Shakespeare drew heavily from Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland.* Shakespeare found a certain pattern working about, during the time between Richard II and Henry VIII. Richard II is dethroned and his throne is usurped by Henry IV. This usurpation sows the seeds of disorder in the country. The disease is imported into the body politic and there is civil war at home. The rise of foreign territories, ruin the finances of the country; and disorder finally end with the union of the two families, York and Lancaster.

7.5. Characteristic

Shakespeare's important historical plays are *Richard II, Henry IV*, part I & II, *Henry V, Richard III.* They have the following common characteristics:

1. The historical plays deal with the medieval period of the British history, roughly from the 12th to 15th century.

2. They are all largely tragic plays striking the great irony of kingship. With the exception of *Henry V*, they all end tragically. Each begins with the display of the magnificence and autocratic rule of the monarch, and each ends with the imprisonment and murder of the king.

3. In each, the base is the historical fact, but the events of history are suitably moulded and even changed to suit the demands of the stage and dramatic effect.

4. The queen plays an important role in each play, generally in bringing about the tragic end of the monarch.

5. Each displays the magnificence and grandeur of medieval England, and very effectively creates an old-world atmosphere. Each is, thus, a product of the patriotic spirit that ruled supreme in the Elizabethan England.

7.6. His treatment of history

In selection of the material, Shakespeare was in touch with common feeling and popular taste. In his plays, he presents a world of larger and wider dimensions than do the earlier writers in the chronicle plays. Man suffers because he chooses a wrong line of action, or because he fails to act at time when action is needed. This fact is well exhibited in all his history plays. The English history of

the middle age is the history of his king versus his barons. If the king has the power to keep his barons under his control, all is well with the state. Otherwise, the country is ruined by mismanagement, internal strife and civil war. Shakespeare selected one of the most momentous periods of Roman history for his historical tragedy. Although his aim was not to present history but rather to write a tragedy of characters figured in Roman history, he did not depart from the main facts of history.

7.7. Disorder

Hence, the picture we get from Shakespeare's Histories is that of disorder and its consequences. Unsuccessful war abroad and civil war at home are the significant aspects of the theme; victory abroad and harmony at home are the exceptions, and the fear of disorder is never absent. Behind disorder, it was then believed, is some sort of order or 'degree' on Earth and that order has its counterpart in Heaven.

The order, which prevails in the Heaven is duplicated on Earth, the King corresponding to the Sun. The Universe is a unity, in which everything has its place and it is the perfect work of God. Any imperfection is the work of man, not of God. Inspite of all the corruption, the marks of God's perfection are still there. Though the idea of unity is basic, the actual order of the world presented itself to the Elizabethans, under three different, though often related, appearances; a chain, a series of corresponding planes, and a dance to music.

As a Chain, creation was a series of beings, stretching from the lowest of inanimate objects upto the archangel nearest to the throne of God. The ascent was gradual, no step missing

If there is a disturbance to this order, there will be chaos. If a person tried to occupy the kingdom, which is not his due, then music is untuned and tumult is the outcome. If the people get a bad king they are expected to put up with difficulties, thinking that God has sent this type of king as punishment to their faults.

Richard II illustrates this theme; When the Duchess of Gloucester brings her brother-in-law. John of Gaunt, to avenge her husband who had been murdered by Richard, he refuses:

God's is the quarrel: for God's substitute

Check Your Progress Questions

1.Shakespeare draws material from _____ for writing his English history plays

2____ is the significant aspect of his history plays

3.What are the exceptions in his history plays?

4.*Richard II* is a _____ play

His deputy anointed in his right

Has caused his death: the which if wrongfully :

Let Heaven revenge: for I may never lift

An angry arm against His minister [Act I sc ii Lines 37-41]

In Shakespeare's view a King's crime invites punishment, first on himself or his descendants, the second on the whole kingdom.

Hence, it can be easily seen that the English scene, viewed from an Elizabethan point of view, was dominated by one urgent need: the need for political stability, governed by an undisputed, monarchy. Consequently, all the history plays of Shakespeare concern themselves with kingship. The burning question is whether the man who occupies the throne can hold the loyalty and obedience of the realm. If he can, the reward is stability at home and foreign conquests abroad. Military aggrandizement is an automatic index of the success of the reign.

7.8 Divine Right Theory

Shakespeare's official belief in respect of English politics was in the theory of Divine Rights of Kings. This theory held that an anointed King could not be resisted except at the price of mortal sin. The reason was that the Church and the State were bound up together and the Coronation service was almost a sacrament. In fact, this idea came from the middle Ages, when the feudal system drew its ultimate on sanction from the notion of a descending scale of life. This would mean that the king naturally drew authority from above and transmitted it to his subordinates. To challenge the king was to question the divinely ordained system of created life. This theory was given a violent boost by the Tudor dynasty, who raised it to the status of an effective historical myth.

To the modern man, the theory of Divine Right looks merely silly and pretentious. It is only when he pauses to get the matter in its historical context that he sees the underlying practicality. In an England, still largely medieval, physical power could not be concentrated at the centre. Communications were slow, and no one ever knew with any certainty how things were developing in remote parts of the country. Success depended on the support of individual noble men, each of whom would put his personal army in the field, in the confidence that its primary loyalty was to him and to whatever cause he chose to follow. Granting this

Check Your Progress Questions

5.Who murdered Duke of Gloucester?

6.What is the concern of his history plays?

situation, it is difficult to see how a country could be united without the doctrine of a Divine Right or a similar one. When power is in the hands of a number of heavily armed feudal overlords, one of whom has the title of a King some very powerful sanction is needed to unite the others in sub-servience to him. Hence, to call in the church to bless the crown, to warn that rebellion displeases God as well as man, seems only common sense, even if the metaphysical background is discarded.

So, the content of the two tetralogies can be briefly stated thus: The king is Lord's anointed, and ought to prevail. But if he is a weak king, like Richard II he will not prevail. His power will be wrested from him, by people like Bolingbroke. If that happens, the usurper will have himself crowned and will then proclaim that God fights on his side. But it is the duty of all men to ignore this claim. When Richard is deposed and Bolingbroke ascends the throne, the Bishop of Carlisle sounds a stern note of warning:

And if you crown him let me prophecy,
The blood of English shall manure the ground
And future ages groan for this foul act,
Peace shall go sleep with Turks and Infidels
And in the sea of peace tumultuous wars
Shall kin with kin, and kind with kind confound;
Disaster, horror fear and mutiny
Shall here inhabit and the land be called
The field of Golgoth and dead men's skulls

7.9. Patriotism

Unabated patriotic fervour was one reason for the popularity of Shakespeare's history plays. He wrote these plays when England was proud of its history. Shakespeare's History-Plays were very practical. They exploited the conscious patriotism of the decade after the Spanish- Armada and instructed an inquisitive public in some of the facts and legends of English history.

The great use of the historic drama says Coleridge, is 'familiarizing men to the great names of the country, and exciting partriotism'. Shakespeare's intention in writing the history plays was not very much to glorify individual characters. He was primarily concerned with destiny of his country. It is England, which appears

as an omnipresent and immortal figure in the plays. The plays deal with the realities of power and authority. Their analysis of individual character, their incidental observation of life, their humour, their pathos are all contained within this framework.

7.10. Nemesis

Besides the patriotic sentiment that suffuses the plays, the working of Fate or Providence is also prevalent. Shakespeare attempts to bring out in these histories, the secret, sure mechanism of NEMESIS the inevitable recoil of a man's deeds on his own head. The history of the English Kings is essentially a history of their misdeeds which have either cost them their lives or plunged the nation into turmoil. The monstrous acts of *Richard III*, the fatal weakness of King John, the unnatural self - love of Richard II, the unscrupulousness of Henry IV, and the overvaulting ambition of Henry V, pave the way for many a national disaster, exemplifying thereby the inexorable workings of a moral law in the universe.

7.11. Long History of 350 years

The First Folio has ten plays based on English history. Shakespeare has given in them the history of nearly 350 years. They are distributed with a curious regularity. First, there is a sequence of four closely linked plays: the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III.* Then follows an isolated play *King John*. There is another sequence of four plays - *Richard II,* the two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V.* And there is second isolated play *Henry VIII.* Disregarding the two isolated plays, it can be further said that the two tetrologies make a single unit. Through these plays Shakespeare links the present happenings with the past.

Check Your Progress Questions

7 ___ years Shakespeare covered in his history plays?

8. What are the four plays which are closely linked?

9 The two isolated plays are ___, ___

Why Shakespeare wrote the second half earlier can only be guessed. Perhaps he thought that vice was easier to picture than virtue; and that it would be safer to spend his present energies on pictures of chaos and a great villain, leaving the more difficult pictures of a prince and perfection to his maturity. In the first tetralogy particularly the Tudor myth the Morality idea of REPUBLICA are the unifying motive.

7.12 Plot construction

There is nothing much to b said about the plot - construction, in the histories. Shakespeare does not follow any set pattern in them. He does not introduce a rising action, a climax, a falling action and a conclusion as evidenced in his later plays. The action generally moves along the course of history to a climax. There are no sub-plots parallel to the main theme in some of the plays. Consequently it is felt that the history plays of Shakespeare do not hold the stage as do his comedies. But it is to the credit of the mastermind that he has reduced the spectacular and thrilling events of long history to a narrow compound of three hours in his plays. The solemnity and the grandeur of English history is kept throughout along with the golden lustre of the dramatist's poetry.

7.13 Summing Up

According to Irving Ribner, among the goals of Renaissance history in the drama the need to throw light upon the political problems of the present by examination of the past. The history emphasizes the political lessons and dramatic conflicts it saw implicit in its subject matter. The dominant theme of Shakespeare's historical plays, therefore is, how a man may fail, and how a man may succeed in attaining a practical mastery of the world. Schelgal called these plays a "mirror for kings." Their characters lead upto King Henry V, who as already pointed out, is the ideal of Shakespeare's manhood; since he is framed for the most and noble and joyous matter of things.

7.14 Questions

1. What are the characteristics of Shakespeare's history plays?
2. Write a note on Divine Right Theory in history plays of Shakespeare.

7.15 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* **2.**unsuccessful war abroad, civil war at home **3.**victory abroad, harmony at home **4.** a history play. **5.** Richard **6.**Kingship **7.** 350 **8.** three parts of *Henry VI, Richard III, Richard II,* the two parts of *Henry IV, Henry V* **9.** *King John, Henry VIII*

7.16 Further Reading

Campbell, Lily B. **Shakespeare's Histories: Mirrors of Elizabethan Play.** London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1977.

Kermode, Frank. **Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance Essays**. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

Unit – 7 B

THE LAST PLAYS

Space for Hints

7.1 Introduction

However varied their criticism might be, critics are agreed on the point that *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* are mutually connected with an intimacy different from that connecting any three either of the earlier comedies or of the tragedies. *As You Like It* does not require a knowledge of *Much Ado* to understand it. Similarly one need not refer to *Othello* in order to understand *Macbeth*. But the prospect of understanding *Cymbeline* without *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* is really poor. And even *The Tempest,* thought to be the most successful of the three, gains much in lucidity when supported by the others.

7.2. Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- how Shakespeare develops the final phase of his tragic pattern.
- the characteristics of his last plays

7.3. Unit Structure

7.1. Introduction

7.2 Unit Objectives

7.3 Unit Structure

7.4 Causes

7.5 Romantic Material

7.6 The Tragic Pattern

7.7 Questions

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.8. Further Reading

7.4. Causes

Critics differ about what Shakespeare was trying to do in these plays. We are told, on the one hand, that in his final phase Shakespeare had become religious and attempted to render a mystical conception of the universe. Critics like Lytton Strachey feel that Shakespeare ended his days in boredom, cynicism and disillusion, and that the technique of verse was all that remained in life to interest

him. There are other critics who see Shakespeare, doting with benevolent purity on his now mature young daughter under the successive forms of Marina, Imogen, Perdita and Miranda, paying a compliment to his medical son-in-law, Dr. Hall, in the character of Cornelius in *Cymbeline*, or even counselling the youthful Fletcher through the lesson in lumbering imposed on Ferdinand, to take more pains with his plays.

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Shakespeare was getting bored with himself, bored with people, bored with real life, bored with drama, bored, in fact, with everything except poetry and poetical dreams. He is no longer interested, as it seems, in what happens, or who says what, as long as he can find place for a faultless lyric, or a new unimagined rhythmetical effect, or a grand mystic speech.

But there is no obvious lack of vitality, considering the rhythm and the imagery. The theatrical conditions or the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher could not have affected Shakespeare's writing though they cannot be casually brushed aside. It is a fact that the indoor theatres were suited to masque and pageantry. Shakespeare made use of improvements in theatrical devices.

Check Your Progress Questions

1.Spenser borrowed Shakespeare's romantic material for writing ____

2 ___ and ___ are the two conceptions of tragedy

3.Why cannot *Pericles* grouped among the Last plays?

4.*Pericles* is a ___ play in the words of Tillyard

5.The main concern of his last plays was ______

Though it is wrong to ignore the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare, it is equally wrong to assume that the things Shakespeare derived from them were exclusively theirs. On the contrary, behind them all was a stock of romantic incident, the common property of the early Jacobean age. This stock was partly medieval and partly classical. It was from this stock that Spenser drew his material for *The Fairie Queene*, but its great rehandling in its usual form of prose narrative was Sidney's *Arcadia*.

7.5. Romantic Material

When therefore, Shakespeare began using romantic material at the end of his career instead of Holinshed and Plutarch, it was not necessarily because he wanted to escape or to be less serious. The 'feigned' history he chose to draw on was taken quite as seriously by his contemporaries as the true history he abandoned.

When Ferdinand meets Miranda, for the first time he says,

Most sure, the goddess
On whom these airs attend, vouchsafe, my prayer;

May know if you remain upon this island
And that you will some good instruction give
How I may bear me here.

It should be approximated to the courtly setting of Arcadia, where correctness of manners was of prime importance. And so with Ferdinand and the whole world of Elizabethan romance for which he stands, these may not be to the modern taste, but they were very much a part of life in early Jacobean days.

7.6 The Tragic Pattern

There are two conceptions of tragedy prevalent. The first is the stoical. Through the nature of things, man at his highest can only resist the forces of the universe, he cannot co-operate with them. His courage is the saving virtue in an incurably perverse state of affairs. The other conception, though it can also include a measure of stoical resistance, includes some sort of reconciliation in the full tragic pattern. Man is summoned to resist certain things in the universal scheme, and suffering and loss result. But ultimately he is reconciled. There is reconstruction, after disintegration. And it is precisely this sense of renewal that accounts for the peculiar tonic effect of the greatest tragedy.

One of Shakespeare's main concerns in his last plays, was to develop the final phase of this tragic pattern.

Though *Pericles* is grouped among the Last Plays, it cannot be considered along with the other three romances. The play is not serious enough to require any elaborate theorizing. The brother scenes are not ultimately effective. However, some of the play's versification is quite significant. In general the play lacks the fullness and complexity that mark most of the verse of the three last plays. On the other hand, there is heard occasionally, perhaps, for the first time in Shakespeare, that simple yet strained remote and magical note that sounds from time to time in the last plays and helps to give them their unique character. It enters into the Welsh scenes in *Cymbeline* the statue scene in *The Winter's Tale* and it may be seen at any moment in *The Tempest*.

Still, Tillyard opines that it is wrong to extract from this novelty of music any more complex fact than that Shakespeare at the time of *Pericles* was being impelled along some new way of expression. Tillyard considers *Pericles* as a

seminal play, rich in undeveloped possibilities, but not as something embodying and fully formed experience in Shakespeare's mind.

In the last three plays, the old order is destroyed as thoroughly as in the main-group of tragedies and it is this destruction that altogether separates them from the realm of comedy in general and from Shakespeare's own earlier comedies in particular.

Examining the bare plots, rather than the total impression of the plays we find in each the same general scheme of prosperity, destruction, and re-creation. The main character is a king. At the beginning he is in prosperity. He then does an evil or misguided deed. Great suffering follows, but during this suffering or at its, height, the seeds of something new to issue from it are germinating, usually in secret. In the end this new element assimilates and transforms the old evil. The king overcomes his evil instincts, joins himself to the new order by an act of forgiveness or repentance and the play issues into a fairer prosperity than had first existed.

7.7 Questions

1. Write a note on Shakespeare's Last plays
2. Write a note on the subject matter of last plays of Shakespeare

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. *The Faerie Queène* **2.**Stoical, Conception **3.** The play is not serious, not effective in brother scenes, lacking in fullness and complexity.

4.seminal **5.**to develop the final phase of tragic pattern.

7.9 Further Reading:

Foakes, R.A. *Shakespeare: the Dark Comedies to the Last Plays: from Satire to Celebration.* London: Routledgte & Kegan Paul, 1971.

Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance Essays.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

UNIT – 8 A

SONG AND MUSIC

Space for Hints

8.1 Introduction

The statement that the Elizabethans were a nest of singing birds is true in more than one sense. They not only produced a great mass of very fine songs and lyrics but were also great lovers of music and the talented among them, could compose and perform music of no mean order. Actually the English had always been a music loving nation. Even as early as the eleventh century, songs were being composed and being sung. The fifteenth century witnessed a large production of church music which was written down and preserved. There must have been a corresponding increase in secular music also, but such music was not written down. During the Renaissance music received a great impetus all over Europe and in England the courtiers were accomplished composers and performers. Among the common people vocal music was rated high, their special favourite being the madrigal.

8.2. Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- Shakespeare's use of music
- Songs of dramatic importance

8.3 Unit Structure

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Unit Objectives

8.3 Unit Structure

8.4 Music in the Elizabethan age

8.5 Shakespeare's use of music

8.6 Summary

8.7 Questions

8.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions

8.9 Further Reading

8.4 Music in the Elizabethan age

W.H. Auden says, "In the Elizabethan age music was regarded as an important social fact. A knowledge of music, an ability to read a madrigal part were expected of an educated person and the extraordinary output of airs and madrigals between 1588 and 1620 testify to both the quantity and quality of music making that must have gone on". If Morely can be believed, a man who could not sing was considered unfit for polite society. Knowledge and skill in music was thus an important status symbol.

8.5 Shakespeare's use of music

Shakespeare's familiarity with the music of his time is manifested in the observation of many of his characters. Lorenzo's lines in *The Merchant of Venice* on 'the sweet power of music' are typical.

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let not such man be trusted; [V i 83-88]

Of all his creations we find Shylock alone despising and having little regard for music. Even the bestial Caliban is capable of a musically aesthetic experience.

The isle is full of noises!
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears and sometimes voices
That, if I then had - waked after long sleep
Will make me sleep again..................(*The Tempest*, III, ii 131-126)

Elizabethan theatres were admirably equipped with musical resources. Many of the boy actors who played both the female and the child roles were trained singers. Some of them were accomplished lutenists. The clowns were veterans in the art of singing and dancing. Among the instruments, the flute was the most popular, followed by the viol, the recorder and the pianoforte. The recorder was in several sizes for the several parts. The pipe and trumpet were used

for material music while the pipe and tabor played by one man simultaneously did for country dancing. The hautboy was the universal reed instrument. The Elizabethan organ was fitted with the flute pipes and could produce rich harmony. The regal was a small harmonium. The stage-directions for *Coriolanus* and *Henry VIII* call for wood wind, brass drums and stringed instruments. This however does not mean that their orchestras were large with all the different instruments being used. The instruments were used singly or in pairs. The Elizabethans had no idea of combining these instruments for orchestral effects.

The medieval mysteries had made plentiful use of music, in their hymns, antiphons and lyrics. The later plays like the Moralities introduced carols and folk songs. Therefore the use of music in plays was an old tradition. The Elizabethan play goers demanded music and songs as part of the entertainment, and dramatists willingly provided them without much care for their relevance. Music played an important part in the plays acted by the choristers of the Chaoel Royal the children of St. Paul's Cathedral, of Windsor, and of Westminister. In the popular theatres music was not given such importance. Since the playwrights were not composers of music they simply wrote lyrics to existing music and confined their instrumental music to 'effects'.

Instrumental music

Shakespeare, the master, made the musical numbers, both vocal and instrumental, the integral parts of the theme and structure of his plays. Music in his plays always has significance. As Auden says, "Shakespeare uses instrumental music for two purposes: on socially appropriate occasions, to represent the voice of this world: of the collective rejoicing as in a dance or mourning as a dead march; and unexpectedly as an auditory image of a supernatural or magical world". The supernatural is usually accompanied by instrumental music which produces the necessary effect of enchantment. Often such music represents the voice of Heaven, as the music of the spheres heard by Pericles and the subterranean music, heard by Antony's soldiers. The supernatural music as understood easily by the soldiers, announces that

The good Hercules whom Antony loved
Now leaves him.

Check Your Progress Questions

1.The Elizabethans were a nest of ___ birds

2.Which was regarded as an important social factor in the Elizabethan age?

3.Which character of Shakespeare despises music?

4.The playgoers demanded ___ as part of the entertainment

It may be music, commanded by spirits and fairies like Oberon and Ariel. Such music is generally played off stage to give the effect of an invisible magical source. Prospero playing the role of Providence orders such music.

Vocal music

Shakespeare makes use of vocal music to indicate breaks in the Action or the passage of time. For instance, in *As You Like It*, the 'catch', "what shall he have that kill'd the deer?" (IV iii) indicates the pause in the development of Action. It is full of ribald puns on the word 'horn'.

Some songs have dramatic significance "when daises pied" and "when icicles hang by the wall" in *Love's Labour's Lost*, bring the play to its conclusion.

There are a few songs which have no relevance to the action of the play but yet embedded 'skillfully by the dramatist', "An old hare hoar" in "*Romeo and Juliet* (II, iv 141-146) and Balthasara's 'sigh no more' in *Much Ado About Nothing* (II iii 64 - 76) come under this category of songs.

That Shakespeare was familiar with the popular songs and ballads in vogue in that era is attested by the numerous songs found fitted in the texture of many of his plays; Silence in Henry II sings And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John: both Hamlet and Lear's Fools make use of ballads for ironical touches and Edgar chants "Childe Rowland to the dark tower came"; Ophelia's singing of ballad snatches reveal her subconscious self. Thus Shakespeare proved himself successful by making use of the emotional and dramatic appeal of the actual music.

Doctors, even then, were aware of the therapeutic value of music. The doctor in *Lear* uses music to sooth frayed nerves and unhinged mind of Lear. These orders for music were given by a character direct to the orchestra prominently situated at the side of the stage as a permanent establishment in theatre. It was to the leader of the orchestra that Duke Orsino could say, 'If music be the food of love, play on", and Cleopatra could order "give me some music-music moody food of us that trade in love".

Shakespeare's use of vocal music in his plays was manifold. Sometimes he meant them for pure entertainment and at other times they are meant to throw a new light upon a character or carry the action forward. Thus songs are indispensably integrated with the plays.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. Spirits' and fairies' music were played off the stage to give the effect of ____

6. Vocal music were played to indicate ____

Labourers doing heavy or dull monotonous work involving repetition find in the tone and rhythm of music something to relieve tedium and strain of their work. Then again, in certain moods, a man feels the irrepressible need to sing, finds relief or joy in self-expression. Another may feel that his sentiment can best be expressed only through a song and so he sings with a certain deliberation, conscious of the fact that he is creating an artistic effect. This is what is called the impromptu song. "The impromptu song is not art but a form of personal behaviour. It reveals something about the singer". The effect need not be pleasing but is either comical or pathetic. When Sir Toby and Sir Andrew sing a catch, it is comical. but when Ophelia sings like a swan at the end, it is exceedingly pathetic. In the case of Autolycus, singing reveals his character and life. But when Iago sings his drinking song, "And let the cannakin kline", he aims at getting Cassia drunk. What he sings is not sincere and therefore can be called pseudo-impromptu song. Indeed music can be used for wicked purposes. When in the *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Protous serenades Sylvia to seduce her and in *Cymbeline* Cloten serenades Imogen, we see how a celestial gift can be abused by wicked men. There is really no music in their souls and so being fit only for stratagems and villainies they make music subserve their wicked ends.

The finest kind of music is found in "commanded music". It is the song that is called for by a character and sung by a professional singer. Such songs are different from the hearty singing of the characters themselves which we have called Impromptu song and which may not have 'finish'. Nor do they resemble the songs of an opera. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Moth, the page boy sings a 'Concolinel' an Irish song and at the end of the play, Moth and another boy sing a few songs. In *Much Ado About Nothing* Balthazar is brought in to provide music and songs. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice* a solo singer comes only for the occasion. In *As You Like It*, Amiens the solo singer is an unimportant character in the play. On the contrary, Feste the clown in *Twelfth Night* is quite an important character and sings beautifully on many occasions. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* we seem to have a full choir of boys employed to sing the special songs in the plays. It has been suggested that Shakespeare was thus lavish in the use of music and songs in these plays, because of competition from the children of the Chapel (the little eyases of *Hamlet*) of course it was possible to recruit boys from these choirs or hire them

Check Your Progress Questions

7.The ___ song expresses singer's sentiment

8 ___ song is not sincere

9 ___ music is sung by a professional singer

10 ___ may be called the very embodiment of music and song in *The Tempest*

11 ___ & ___ are the professional composers to set music for Shakespeare's works.

for the occasion. Shakespeare employed them for plays like, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Merry Wives of Windsor* or when really high class music was needed. But after Robert Armin joined Shakespeare's company, he was needed to provide fine music and also to act important parts in the play. He played Feste, the clown in *Twelfth Night* and Ariel in *The Tempest.*

The Tempest is full of instrumental and vocal music and Ariel may be called the very embodiment of music and song. He is almost like a figure in an opera; but Auden says, "Ariel is not an alien visitor from the world of opera who has wandered into spoken drama by mistake". Since he is not human, his voice has the impersonality of a musical instrument. It is not like Feste singing to feed the love of Orsino or to amuse the caterwauling knights. Ariel's music is akin to the voice of Heaven and since Prospero plays Providence, Ariel can play the role of Heaven's messenger even in his songs. But music is not allowed to dominate the play.

8.6 Summary

There can be no doubt that Shakespeare himself had a very considerable knowledge of music. His poems and plays are full of allusions to the art. Even in the use of technical terms connected with the art, he is accurate. Shakespeare however did not compose the music for his songs. He only provided the words and professional composers like Morely or Robert Johnson set them to music. Quite often the words and the music do not agree. Shakespeare did not think of making music one of the channels of dramatic expression. Music is for him always something extraneous, as it is in ordinary life.

8.7 Questions

1. Write a note on Shakespeare's use of vocal and instrumental music
2. Write a note on music in the Elizabethan age

8.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions

1. singing **2.**music **3.**Shylock **4.**music and songs
5.an invisible magical source **6.**'the passage of time **7.** impromptu
8.The pseudo-impromptu **9.** commanded music **10.**Ariel
11 Morely, Robert Johnson

8.9 Further Reading:

Dent, Alan. *World of Shakespeare: Sports and Pastimes*. London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1973.

Sternfeld, F.W. *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

UNIT – 8 B

Space for Hints

SOLILOQUY

8.1 Introduction

Soliloquy has been defined as "a discourse made by one in solitude" or simply as "Thinking aloud". It is a dramatic device in which one character talks to himself or herself. The first and foremost function of a soliloquy is self-revelation, that is, revelation of a character's innermost thoughts or motives. As Hudson puts it, soliloquy is a device of the dramatist for taking us down into the hidden recesses of a person's nature and for revealing those springs of conduct which ordinary dialogue provides him no adequate opportunity to disclose. The dramatist makes the characters 'think aloud' to themselves, so that the audience may 'overhear' what they have got to reveal.

8.2 Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- the use of soliloquy in Shakespeare's plays
- Shakespeare's poetic power

8.3 Unit Structure

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Unit Objectives

8.3 Unit Structure

8.4 Causes

8.5 Origin

8.6 Soliloquy in *Hamlet*

8.7 Soliloquy in *Macbeth*

8.8 Soliloquy in *Othello*

8.9 Summary

8.10 Questions

8.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions

8.12 Further Reading:

8.4 Causes

Shakespeare made effective use of the soliloquy in his plays for different purposes. He used to give the audience a better understanding of the character through the character's self-analysis. Sometimes the soliloquy functioned as a

running commentary on the action of the play. It is used also to tell the audience certain facts without which the course of events depicted on the stage might not be fully comprehended. It helped to lay bare the soul of a character, to reveal the motives and the psychological conflicts that would account for the way, a character behaved in a particular situation.

8.5 Origin

Soliloquy has its origin in the chorus of the Greek tragedies which had several functions to perform. The Greek chorus originally comprised many persons but gradually the number became reduced. The Greek chorus acted as a connecting link between the character and the audience. The dramatist often used the chorus as an instrument for communicating certain facts or information to the spectator or for relating things which could not be possibly represented on the stage. In modern plays, the chorus has been replaced by an actor who helps to communicate facts, reveal 'motives to predict future events or courses of action'.

In Shakespeare's plays, it is always a character given to speculative thought, an individual who has something to conceal, a person of villainous intentions or one who experiences great psychological conflicts that makes use of soliloquies. Soliloquies are found more in his tragedies than in his comedies or histories. Shakespeare uses things which cannot be otherwise revealed either through statement or planned incidents. *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello,* and *King Richard* have some of the well known soliloquies of Shakespeare.

8.6 Soliloquy in *Hamlet*

In *Hamlet* we have nine major soliloquies, five uttered by Hamlet and four by Claudius. The first soliloquy (Act I Sc I 129-159) takes us towards the understanding of Hamlet's character. We see him as a cynic and a pessimist, a hater of women in general because his mother has entered into an incestuous marriage relationship with her dead husband's brother. His brooding on the shameless conduct of his mother has led him towards world-weariness and disgust with living itself. He longs for death and even contemplates suicide. This pattern of thought and conflict in Hamlet gets revealed through the medium of soliloquy. It is such soliloquies as these that justify Bradley's opinion that *Hamlet* is as much a tragedy of reflection as tragedy of moral idealism.

The second soliloquy of Hamlet (Act I sc, 5, 92-109) gives us a clue to his feigned madness. After he learns from the Ghost the secret behind the death of his father, Hamlet decides to don the mask of madness to deceive Claudius. The third soliloquy (Act II Sc 2-585-642) shows Hamlet as a man of action who wants to test the truth of the Ghost's revelation by enacting before Claudius and his mother a play, to catch the conscience of the King. In the soliloquy Hamlet contrasts his own apathy and lack of action with the feigned passions of the actor, in the play.

The soliloquy beginning with "To be or not to be - that is the question" (Act III Sc-2,-52-90) is the most celebrated soliloquy in the play, because it is the most philosophic of all Shakespeare's soliloquies. It also reveals the complete nature of Hamlet's state of mind. It reveals his pessimism, his cynicism and his morbidity. Hamlet even contemplates suicide. But the uncertainty of what would happen after death prevents him from destroying himself. As Hamlet declares, conscience does make cowards of us all. Excessive thinking leads to theorising and inaction.

The fifth soliloquy is uttered by Hamlet towards the end of Act IV, on seeing the army of Fortinbras marching against Poland. The soldiers are ready to die "for an egg shell". He blames himself for his inaction; he is no better than a beast.

The various soliloquies of Claudius, similarly function as media to reveal the nature of Claudius, to explain various states of his mind and to hasten the dramatic action of the play.

In short, Shakespeare made an effective use of this dramatic device in *Hamlet*. Otherwise the complexity of Hamlet's character would not have been made so vivid and clear as now it stands. Without these soliloquies, the play might have degenerated into cheap melodrama.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. What is the foremost function of soliloquy?
2. Soliloquy has its origin in ____
3. In Shakespeare's plays, soliloquies are found mostly in ____
4. How many soliloquies are spoken by Hamlet?

8.7 Soliloquy in *Macbeth*

In *Macbeth*, there are too many 'Asides'. They are all in the nature of brief soliloquies and they reveal the inner motive of the characters. The first soliloquy is uttered by Macbeth before murdering Duncan. The soliloquy shows him as one who is fully conscious of the noble qualities of his royal guest.

…………this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking off.

Apart from what it reveals, this soliloquy is also great poetry.

The soliloquy in which Macbeth declares, he sees a dagger shows the mind of Macbeth. The two soliloquies show that the conscience in Macbeth is not yet dead and it is this which places Macbeth above Lady Macbeth, as a human being. The later soliloquies trace the gradual degradation of Macbeth after becoming king.

8.8 Soliloquy in *Othello*

Surprisingly enough, in *Othello* all significant soliloquies have been given to Iago, the villain of the play. Some critics object to this on the ground "a villain is never likely to admit his villainy to himself". But Iago is a 'complex' character and so soliloquies are necessary for him to reveal himself to the audience. Moreover Othello is not of a reflective mould; if he is loaded with soliloquies it may appear improper. That is why Shakespeare has assigned all important soliloquies to Iago.

In the first soliloquy itself Iago reveals his innermost thoughts. He is bent on taking revenge upon Othello for appointing Cassio as lieutenant, instead of promoting him. He plans for a double knavery "to get his place and to plume up my will". His second soliloquy lets us into another secret. He wants to enjoy Desdemona because he thinks that Othello had seduced his wife Emilia. Other soliloquies of Iago make the audience aware of his schemes to discredit Cassio and poison the mind of Othello by making him suspect Desdemona's chastity. Hart remarks, "a study of Iago's soliloquies is of such interest. It is a device which Shakespeare has used more powerfully in *Othello* perhaps than elsewhere. I mean his scene-ending soliloquies which develop the plot". Thus the soliloquies of Iago while they reveal the intricate thoughts of the villain, also help further the action of the play.

Shakespeare does not give Othello as many soliloquies as he has given Iago because Othello is first and foremost a man of action. "He is innocent, and can be easily played upon". The only important soliloquy of Othello occurs towards the end of the play, before he murders the sleeping Desdemona. Othello tries to justify his action in the name of honour and justice, though he feels drawn

Check Your Progress Questions

5 In *Othello* all the important soliloquies are assigned to ____

6 ____ is the part of the greatness of Shakespeare's writing?

to her. He decides to strike where he loves most; the deed he is about to do is not murder but sacrifice; There is an unmistakable tenderness in every word of the soliloquy. He is no longer furious. "His anger has passed - a boundless sorrow has taken its place". S.A. Brooke comments, "There is an unspeakable tenderness in every word of the soliloquy. He is no longer furious; he is deadly quiet; and he is quiet because after tossing to and fro in doubt he is resolved to kill".

8.9 Summary

One can find the effective use of Soliloquy in Shakespeare's other plays also, particularly in plays like *King Lear, Richard II* and *Richard III.* Soliloquies are a part of Shakespeare's great writings. Each soliloquy has a function to perform depending on the context in which it is uttered. It is an integral part of the play; it helps speed up action, it reveals character; it gives a self-analysis of motive and attitudes; it serves as a commentary on the situations; it bears evidence to Shakespeare's poetic power, and feeling for musical expression. The plays would not have been what they are, but for the soliloquies. Many characters would have remained flat and dull if only the soliloquies had not revealed the workings of their minds. Some are of the view that soliloquies are artificial or unnatural and therefore they interfere with dramatic interest. But in the hands of Shakespeare, the master dramatist the soliloquies have a major role to play. As Turner puts it: "then, in its proper perspective, we need never quarrel with Shakespeare's use of soliloquy; for all the purposes of his time and art it was natural and effective".

8.10 Questions

1. Write a note on Shakespearean soliloquy
2. Comment on the use of soliloquy in Shakespeare's tragedies

8.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions

1. Self-revelation 2.the chorus of the Greek tragedies 3.tragedies
4.Five 5.Iago 6. Soliloquy

8.12 Further Reading:

Dent, Alan. *World of Shakespeare: Sports and Pastimes*. London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1973.

Sternfeld, F.W. *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

UNIT – 8 C

Space for Hints

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

8.1 Introduction

Shakespeare makes dramatic use of the Elizabethan belief in the supernatural agencies. His audience was not very sophisticated, and revelled in bloodshed, excitement and sensationalism. H. Littedale suggests that the Elizabethans were superstitious and believed in folklore transmitted through ages: "Shakespeare and his contemporaries bountifully illustrate the superstitious credulity which guided their contemporaries' conduct, moulded many of their social customs, and governed their habitual interpretation of natural phenomena. Superstition which crystallized into folklore absorbed much that passed for scientific observation even among the educated". There is enough magic in Shakespeare of one kind or another from his very first play. But in some of the plays, the supernatural phenomena like witches, ghosts, demons and fairies are used not so much for catering to the prevailing Elizabethan tastes as for depending the sense of awe and wonder. Shakespeare's attitude to the supernatural is sometimes light-hearted sometimes serious, but always dramatically relevant.

8.2 Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- the dramatic relevance of supernatural elements
- analyse the role of ghost, fairies and witches
- the supernatural elements in his plays

8.3 Unit Structure

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Unit Objectives

8.3 Unit Structure

8.4 Ghost in earlier period works

8.5 Ghost in Shakespeare

8.6 Witches in Shakespeare

8.7 Fairies in Shakespeare

8.8 Supernatural elements in *Richard III*

8.9 Supernatural elements in *Julius Caesar*

8.10 Supernatural elements in *Hamlet*
8.11 Supernatural elements in *Macbeth*
8.12 Supernatural elements in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
8.13 Supernatural elements in *The Tempest*
8.14 Supernatural elements in *Julius Caesar*
8.15 Supernatural elements in *King Lear*
8.16 Summary
8.17 Questions
8.18 Answers to Check Your Progress
8.19 Further Reading

8.4 Ghost in earlier period woks

Supernatural phenomenon was an essential feature in the Greek tragedies. The first reference to the ghost is to be found in Aeschylus *Eumenides*. It is a revenge - ghost and urges the furies to take revenge. In Euripides' *Hecuba* the ghost is a Prologue - ghost - a ghost which introduces dramatic action. During the Renaissance, Thomas Hughes wrote *Misfortunes of Arthur*, which may be described as the first ghost play, the ghost urging revenge. In Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* the ghost has a two fold function; it is a prologue-ghost as well as a revenge ghost. In Marlowe's play *Dr Faustus*, Faustus evokes Mephistophilis, the messenger of Lucifer. The devil is quite undevilish and there is even a touch of humaneness when the devil pleads to Faustus :

Why this is hell, nor am I out of it :
Think's thou that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being depriv 'd of everlasting bliss?
O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul!

(*Doctor Faustus*. Act I sc iii. Lines 76-82)

8.5 Ghost in Shakespeare

In Shakespeare's hand the ghost for the first time becomes a real character having all human attributes. "Shakespeare's ghost", says Dover Wilson: "is both a revenge-ghost and a prologue-ghost, that is to say from the technical point of

view, it corresponds with its Senecan prototype. But there, the likeness ends. For it is one of Shakespeare's glories that he took the conventional puppet, humanised it, christianised it and made it a figure that his spectators would recognise as real, as something which might be encountered in any lonely graveyard at midnight".

Shakespeare must have been thoroughly familiar with the contemporary philosophical and theological ideas about the ghosts and apparition. The Catholics believed that the ghosts which were the spirits of the departed, might visit the earth from Purgatory. The Protestants did not believe in Purgatory and to them the ghosts were merely devils which assumed the form of the dead. King James I believed in ghosts and expressed his views on the subject in *Demonology* published in the year 1597. In order to please the king, quite a few playwrights including Shakespeare wrote a number of plays with ghosts and witches as characters in the play. Reginald Scot published a book *Discovery of Witchcraft* in 1584 to which he appended *A Discourse upon Devils and Spirits.* He stated that ghosts were more illusion, thus contradicting the King's views. King James was furious and he ordered that Scot's book should be burnt publicly. Apart from books of James and Scot, there was another book called *Of Ghosts and Spirits walking by Night* by Ludwig Lavater and Spalding's *Elizabethan Demonology.* Shakespeare must have had an access to these books.

Check Your Progress Questions

1 Elizabethans had the belief in ____

2 Shakespeare's attitude to the supernatural is ____

3.Thomas Hughes' ____ is the first ghost play

4 Shakespeare's use of supernatural agency is a ____ in his plays

It is futile to argue whether Shakespeare believed in ghosts and supernatural agencies. As Moulton observes that for the assumption of such supernatural existence "the responsibility lies not with Shakespeare, but with the opinion of the age he is portraying. A more important question is how far Shakespeare uses such supernatural agency as a motive force in his plays; how far he allows it into the working of events, for the interpretation of which he is responsible. On this point Shakespeare's usage is clear and subtle; he uses the agency of the supernatural to intensify, illuminate human action, not to determine it".

It appears from these plays that there are two types of ghosts- (i) objective and (ii) subjective. The objective one is seen by many, like that of the ghost of King Hamlet in *Hamlet.* The subjective is hallucinatory, like that of Banquo's ghost seen by Macbeth. Three witches open the play *Macbeth.* They are old decrepit hags with an inverted sense of values, -

Fair is foul and foul is fair

8.6 Witches in Shakespeare

The ultimate responsibility for the course of events, in tragedies cannot be placed on ghosts and witches, whatever might be their role. The witches only tempt Macbeth but never force him to perform any act. Similarly, in *Hamlet*, even though the ghost initiates the action, the responsibility is with Prince Hamlet. On this point, A.C. Bradley remarks: "the supernatural is always, placed in the closest relation with character. It gives a confirmation and distinct form to inward movements already present and exerting an influence; to the sense of failure in Brutus; to the stifled workings of conscience in Richard; to the half formed thought or the horrified memory of guilt in Macbeth; to suspicion in Hamlet. Moreover, its influence is never of a compulsive kind. It forms no more than an element, however important, in the problem".

8.7 Fairies in Shakespeare

Shakespeare has also made use of fairies in some of his plays. Since his childhood Shakespeare must have been thoroughly familiar with the fairies of Warwickshire folklore and this knowledge is responsible for the creation of Puck or Oberon in his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Yet it is not a question of mere assimilation and faithful representation of popular beliefs only; sometimes his treatment ran counter to the popular concepts also. To the fairies, "*these airy nothings*" he has given a local habitation and a name. And in representing them as benevolent, ethereal little creatures who meddle in human affairs and play mischievous pranks, the dramatist deviated from the concept of fairies as malign cruel spirits. Shakespeare's influence has been such that his imaginative conception has replaced the traditional view.

Shakespeare's skill in introducing ghosts, witches, and fairies is revealed on an examination of those plays with the supernatural beings. Ghost is introduced *in Richard III, Julius Caesar, Hamlet* and *Macbeth.* Fairies dominate *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. Cumberland Clark rightly comments in his *Shakespeare and the Supernatural*: "Shakespeare's attitude towards the supernatural as expressed in these plays, varies considerably. It begins with light-

hearted, amused tolerance and changes to 'serious mediation and apprehension' and emerges, with a renewed faith and confidence in good".

8.8 Supernatural elements in *Richard III*

Richard III is out and out a Machiave ian character who has waded through blood to the throne. He pursues evil with a whole - souled quality and he works so hard at being the very best kind of villain. He is the centre of energy in the play. As E.M.W Tillyard has remarked, he is Shakespeare's first character to impress himself upon as being "larger than life". His hypocrisy, his play acting, his powers of persuasion, his fox like slyness and above all his virtuosity as a villain are well expressed in the play by Richard himself.

Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile,
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions
I can add colours to the chameleon.

(*Richard III* Act III: Sc ii Lines 182-91)

Only once does the audience suffer any real emotional involvement with Richard. When he awakes after the ghostly visitation of his eleven victims, he, for a moment, exposes himself as mere man. On the eve of the battle of Besworth, the ghosts appear in his dream and curse him. This is Nemesis, the divine retribution, and Richard's conscience, so long deadened, is awakened. In place of the brilliant artifact we see a certified human creature unable to find pity or love even on himself. Now, he is completely ensnared by fear alone. It is a moving moment in the play:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain,
Perjury, perjury in the highest degree,
Murder, stern murder, in the direct degree.
All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty! guilty!
I shall despair there is no creature loves me;

Check Your Progress Questions

5 What are the two types of ghosts Shakespeare used in his plays?

6 _____ appear in *A Midsummer Night's Dream The Tempest*

7 _____ appear in *Richard III Julius Caesar Hamlet Macbeth*

And if I die, no soul will pity me,
And, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself? " (Act V, Sc iii: 194-204)

The ghosts that haunt Richard in his dream are subjective ghosts. Shakespeare introduces them at the right moment and also shows that even this diabolic villain is after all a human being. The introduction of the ghosts not only heightens the dramatic effect but also deepens the characterisation of Richard.

8.9 Supernatural elements in *Julius Caesar*

The ghost of Julius Caesar, that appears before Brutus is also a subjective ghost. Brutus with his fellow conspirators has killed Julius Caesar in the Forum. Before the assassinatic.., Brutus is in a dilemma; how tr econcile his political decision that Caesar should be killed – as a public man with his conscience as a private man: He is fully aware that absolute power usually corrupts absolutely; he is able to bring his personal feelingls into lir. with his sense of public duty. Yet he is not comfortable with his decision. He continues to distinguish between Caesar and "the spirit of Caesar".

Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Casius
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar.
And in the spirit of men there is no blood,
O that we then could come by Caesar's spirit
And not dismember Caesar! But alas,
Caesar must bleed for it. (Act II Sc i Lines 166-171)

As long as Brutus remains dazed, the ghost loom large before him only to disappear as Brutus gets back his self-composure. But never could he get out of his personal feeling. He believes that he has seen the apparition of Caesar and that the spirit of Caesar is sure to wreak vengeance on him. Even when he dies in a "high Roman fashion," his words are:

Caesar, now be still,
I killed not thee -with half so good a will (Act V Sc V Lines 49-50)

The ghost of Caesar is only subjective and as Hudson comments the ghost is brought in to bring the "horrible vision upon Brutus just after he has heard of Portia's shocking death".

8.10 Supernatural elements in *Hamlet*

The ghost of Hamlet's father is oth objective and subjective. E.C. Chambers opines that Shakespeare wrote "the scene of the ghost in *Hamlet* at his house which bordered on the charnal-house and churchyard". The ghost is first seen by Marcellus and Bernando and later by Horatio. Hamlet sees it when the matter is reported to him. He was a student of philosophy at the Wittenberg University and quite naturally he feels:

If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. (Act I Se, ii Lines 244-46)

Subsequently when Hamlet sees the ghost he is awe-struck and exclaims:

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

But when he talks with the ghost he is convinced that it is not a mere illusion nor a devil either. The dialogue between the ghost and Hamlet becomes the pivot to the play. Dover Wilson while remarking about the appearance of the ghost points out that, "Shakespeare managed to lift the whole ghost-business on to a higher level, to transform a ranting, roistering abstraction into a thing at once tender and majestical". The ghost has a majestical appearance and its language, is quite tender full of pathos and showing concern for the beloved son. Shakespeare allows the ghost to appear four times, to establish its objectivity.

In *Hamlet*, the function of the ghost is not only to deepen the sense of mystery and forge a link between the world of reality and the world unseen, but also to induce the prince to action. The ghost is a revenge-ghost which conveys to Hamlet the story of his foul and unnatural murder and initiates him to take revenge for his murder.

The ghost appears again in Act III, Scene IV, when Hamlet meets his mother and "speaks daggers" to her. The intention of his reappearance is to kindle the procrastinating spirit of Hamlet and to remind him of his purpose.

"Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose".

(Act III Sc IV, Lines 111-112)

At the same time, the ghost shows its deep concern for his dear wife. One cannot fail to see the human significance in the ghost. It knows that the son's

dagger-like speech to curb his mother is of no purpose. It continues tc be a loving husband and tries to curb the son's frenzy:

"O step between her and her fighting soul!

Conceit it weakest bodies strongest works".

(Act III Sc iv Lines 114-15)

In this scene, the ghost is subjective because Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, cannot see it and dismisses the whole affair as "the very coinage" of his brain. Whereas Hamlet holds a conversation with it in her very presence and she feels as though he is speaking to air because he is mad. The ghost thus is at once subjective and objective.

8.11 Supernatural elements in *Macbeth*

The introduction of the three witches or the weird sisters in the first scene itself creates an eerie atmosphere. Shakespeare's view about the witches is those of Reginald Scot. According to Scot, they can "pass from place to place in the air invisible". They can "keep devil and spirits in the likeness of toads and cats" and they can transfer corn in the blade from one place to another. They can manifest themselves into the hidden things, foreshow things of the future, as though they are of present. Shakespeare, however, improves upon them, "rehandling and heightening whatever could touch the imagination with fear, horror and mysterious attraction".

'*Macbeth*' says Nicoll, "more than any other of Shakespeare's plays, is enwrapped in certain distinctive atmosphere, the atmosphere of the supernatural". Apart from the weird sisters, Hecate and the ghost of Banquo are introduced to intensify the mystery of the plan and make it a cosmic tragedy. The Hecate scenes are considered to be interpolations obviously designed in order to introduce songs and dances by the witches. The songs "come away" and "Black spirits" are borrowed from Thomas Middleton's *The Witch*, where the texts appear in full. These songs serve a useful purpose, in supplying language to the dramatist such as

O, well done I commend your pains;

And everyone shall share 'I' the gains;

And now about the cauldron sing,

Like elves and fairies in a ring,

Enchanting all that you put in.

(Act IV Sc I Lines 39-44)

The ghost of Banquo is subjective for it is seen only by Macbeth. It is a hallucination of Macbeth's conscience stricken mind. The ghost, like the air "drawn dagger" is also an expression of Macbeth's diseased imagination

8.12 Supernatural elements in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Ghosts haunt the tragedies; but in comedies, fairies and elves flutter their coloured and gay wings, bringing solace and mirth, and sometimes nuisance to the lovers. Shakespeare's fairy world. as portrayed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a complex creation, stained w... many taints. It is said that the dramatist is indebted to the Celtic and Teutonic mythologies as well as the romances of Arthur and Charlemagne.

Keightley in his *Fairy Mythology* states that Shakespeare, having *The Faerie Queene* before his eyes, seems to have attempted a blending of the Elves of the village with the Fays of Romance. His fairies agree with the former in their diminutive stature, in their fondness for dancing, their love of cleanliness, and their child-abstracting propensities. Like the Fays, they form a community ruled over by the princely Oberon and the fair Titania... They are either not mortal or their date of life is indeterminately long; they are of a nature superior to man; and speak with contempt of human follies. Puck has poured the love juice mistakenly over Lysander's eyes, but is prepared to enjoy the consequences of his mischievous sport. Not only does he invite his Lord Oberon to see and enjoy the pageant, but also makes contemptuous remarks on the human beings.

Puck: Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, -what fools these mortals be !
Oberon: Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.
Puck : Then will two to at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously .

(Act III Sc ii Lines 114-121)

Keightley further adds that fairies revel by night beneath the light of the moon and stars, retiring at the approach of Aurora's harbinger, but not

compulsively like ghosts and damned spirits. "Puck' he says, "is evidently the same with the old word *Pouke* the original meaning of which would seem to be devil, demon or evil spirit". Keightley gives a long list, how Puck is called in various countries. Once again Shakespeare has not followed his original sources, but has paralleled his Puck with *Knecnt Ruprecht* the Robin of Germany, a domestic spirit.

Keightley thinks that the dramatist has derived his Puck from a little work published in Elizabeth's reign under the title *The mad pranks and merry jests of Robin Good Fellow.*

The fairy world in *The Midsummer Night's Dream* with Oberon and Titania as the king and Queen, and Puck as the messenger and jester, creates confusions and finally resolves them too. The most prominent trait in the character of Puck is, obviously, his love of mischief. He revels in frightening maidens and old women, in misleading travellers, in practical jokes and in provoking mirth. The crude artisan players are ideal butts for Puck's impishness; he delights in seeing Bottom wearing an ass's head and the Queen fondling his long ears. But, Puck is not always impish; he has his better qualities. He even feels some compassion for the sleeping Hermia; he is prepared to bring good luck to those who praise him. The last speech in the play reveals as probably the best of Puck:

"And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend;
If you pardon, we will mend". (Act V Sc ii Lines 58-61)

8.13 Supernatural elements in *The Tempest*

The Tempest is a play of magic that deals with the world of spirits and fairies. According to Dr. Johnson, the spirits had different habitations, namely, air, earth, water and caves. The earthly spirits seemed to have been thought most depraved, and Ariel, the least vitiated. With the help of magic, Prospero gets his wishes fulfilled his essential tool being Ariel. The water spirits perform the masque of Juno; they are at Prospero s beck and call. Thus, the supernatural element in this play has two distinct stands namely Prospero's magic and the spirits.

The introduction of Ariel immediately reminds us of Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* While the latter is a mischief-monger, the former is refined, a minister of revenge, but bringing only good to the wrong-doer. He is always changeful, alert and active, full of joy and gaiety. "Music is his expression - All he sings is poetry; all his speech is song". Ariel is not a mere elemental force. He retains humanity without being human.

Scattered through his plays are references to various superstitious beliefs of the time. Magic-man's control over supernatural power - was an Elizabethan obsession. Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* is a typical example where Faustus is a practitioner of black magic. In Prospero, Shakespeare represents a magician who employs "white magic" contrary to the beliefs of the Elizabethans, who associated only evil with magic. Prospero's magic is a good magic, bringing about a 'sea change'.

"Those are pearls that -were his eyes. (Act I Sc ii Line 399)

Belief in the ability of a dying man to see into the future is represented in John of Gaunt's dying speech in *Richard II* as well as in Hotspur's speech in *Henry IV-part I.* The belief that everyone has a guardian spirit is used in *Antony and Cleopatra.*

8.14 Supernatural elements in *Julius Caesar*

In *Julius Caesar* there are various references to superstitious happenings. The sooth-sayer warns Caesar.

"Beware the ides of March"

(Act I ii Line-18)

The owl that is seen only at night is seen during the day time too; a lioness is seen whelping in the street; graves yawn and let out the dead; and from the cloud drops fire. All these aberrations in Nature mean that something is rotten in the state of Rome. Shakespeare also voices the popular belief in omens:

"When beggars die there are no comets seen:
But the heaven themselves blaze forth the death of kings"

(Act II Sc II Lines 30-31)

The minds that are steeped in superstitions are highly imaginative and see things that may not have happened. Shakespeare by the exercise of his splendid dramatic skill, by the willing suspension of disbelief constitutes poetic faith.

There are also references to astrological beliefs of the period and the different points of view in regard to astrology are presented. The view against astrology is aired by Cassius in *Julius Caesar*.

"The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves"

8.15 Supernatural elements in *King Lear*

In *King Lear*, there is a running debate on astrological belief. When Gloucester expresses his belief in eclipses, Edmund mocks at him.

> *"This is the excellent foppery of the world that when we are sick in fortune, often, the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and lechers by special predominance, drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforced obedience of Planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on".* (Act I Sc ii Lines 115-122)

8.16 Summary

We may note finally that in his use of the supernatural, Shakespeare never indulges in Gothic excess, or in the supernatural for its own sake. The supernatural is subordinated to the main action of the play and this world with its comedy and tragedy, is always at the centre of Shakespeare's stage. Shakespeare is often indebted to others for his ghosts, witches, spirits and fairies, but he recreates them. M.G. Bradbrook rightly remarks: "In all his supernatural creations, he [Shakespeare] seems to have created completely new species of creatures, and these of all his characters were eagerly copied by his contemporaries and immediate successors".

8.17 Questions

1. Supernatural elements in *King Lear*
2. Supernatural elements in *Julius Caesar*
3. Witches and ghosts in Shakespeare's plays

8.18 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. supernatural agencies 2. dramatically relevant 3. *Misfortunes of Arthur* 4. motive force 5. objective and subjective 6.Fairies 7. Ghost

8.19 Further Reading:

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Sternfeld, F.W. *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

UNIT – 9 A

FOOLS

Space for Hints

9.1 Introduction

Shakespeare, who saw life more wisely and completely than other poets, realized the significance of humour, wit and laughter. The success of earlier comedies on the stage to which the introduction of fools greatly contributed made him think in terms of introducing them in his plays. In his comedies they matter much and remain the source of some of his finest effects. In each of his comedies, he has introduced the fool or some rustic clownish characters to entertain the readers and audience with his antics and foolery. The fool is introduced in comedies as well as into tragedies, historical plays as well as romance. They are privileged to speak any amount of sense and nonsense before any august assembly, and sparing none of the august persons for jokes, which were sometimes farcical and even vulgar. He had also the movements of his body – some kind of gesture which also was intended to excite laughter.

9.2. Objectives

- To make the students understand the elements of Romantic comedy
- To make the students assess Shakespeare's contribution to English Literature

9.3. Structure

9.1. Introduction
9.2. Objectives
9.3. Structure
9.4 Origin
9.5 Ornamentation
9.6 Critical Opinion
9.7 Influence
9.8 Functions of the Fun-makers
9.9 Uniqueness of Shakespeare's Fools
9.10 Indiscriminate Use of Fools and Clown
9.11 Summary
9.12 Questions

9.13Answers to Check Your Progress
9.14 Further Reading

9.4 Origin

The word 'fools' is derived from Latin 'follis' which means a pair of bellows, a windbag. A fool is a pair of bellows in that his words are only air, empty of meaning. 'Clown' is a derivative of Latin 'Clod' which denotes a stupid, rustic person. From these derivations we understand that fools and clowns look and act silly in various ways such as grimacing, shaking bauble and singing snatches of songs. However, the clowns remain sharply distinguished from the fools. Unlike the fools they were clumsy country bumpkins. They were dull and cold without a glimmer of brightness or quickness about them. We always laugh at the clowns but laugh with the fools.

9.5 Ornamentation

According to Douce, the dress of the fools was a motley or parti-coloured and attached to the body by a girdle with bells at the skirts and elbows (though not always). A hood resembling a monks cowl covered the head entirely and fell down over the breast and shoulders. It was sometimes decorated with ass's ears or else terminated in the neck and head of a cock ..... This fool usually carried in his hand an official sceptre or bauble which was a short stick ornamented at the end with the figure of a fool's head or sometimes that of a doll or puppet. To this instrument there was frequently annexed an inflated skin or bladder with which the fool belaboured those who offended him or with whom he was inclined to make sport.

9.6 Critical Opinion

Opinions differ as to the prototype of the fools of Shakespeare. A great critic on Shakespeare's fools Dr. R.H. Goldsmith asserts that Shakespeare's fool is derived from Erasmus. Some say that the fool is a direct descendant of Devil or the Vice of the Morality plays. There is yet another tradition which relates the fools to the medieval minstrel and "joculator" who used to roam about the soil jesting and parodying others. Another tradition has it that the Elizabethan fool is

modelled upon the jester or juggler attached to nobility of courts. The Vidushaka of the ancient Indian drama was a counterpart of the fool.

9.7 Influence

Shakespeare was considerably influenced by certain comic actors also. Richard Tarleton, who influenced him most, was an established comic actor who threw the audience into roars of laughter simply by walking on the stage. His successor Will Kempe was in no way less comic. He must have acted the part of Dogberry, Peter, Touchstone, Feste and Lancelot. It is obvious that Shakespeare wrote his comedies, especially the Comic scenes, keeping in mind these actors.

Well does Viola (*Twelfth Night*) sum up the manners that characterised the institution of the merry - makers

This fellow's wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of wit:
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of person, and the time,
And, like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man's art.

9.8 Functions of the Fun-makers

The functions of the fun-makers are invariably (i) to make the audience laugh by their lively wit and merry humour (ii) keep the dialogue going in the intervals of action, (iii) pun on words and extract fun from them (iv) supply readily both song and drama and (v) to moralise, or sermonise or philosophise over certain situations and incidents or characters. They are the shrewd judges and licensed critics of men and matters and are known for their ready wit, penetration and quick repartee. They serve as connecting links between the scenes. John Ray has aptly compared Shakespeare's fools to butterflies which are there "to adorn the world and *delight* the eyes of men to brighten the countryside, serving like many golden spangles to decorate the fields". Coleridge feels that the place of the ancient Greek chorus is supplied by the fools of Shakespeare. Like the classical dramas the fools expose the folly and affectation without any fear.

Check Your Progress Questions

1 The word 'fools' is derived from Latin ____

2.The word 'clown' is derived from Latin ____

3 Which comic actor acted the part of Dogberry, Perry, Touchstone, Feste and Lancelot?

The main purpose of the appearance of the fool in certain scenes is to relieve the tragic tension or even to intensify the tragic tension by lending a grin, sarcastic tone to his humour or fooleries. Sometimes their function is to moralise or sermonize or philosophise over certain situations and incidents of the play or even of the hero or the heroine of the play or sometimes his function is to give the connecting links between the scenes or the acts of the play, while at other times his function is to explain certain things either the behaviour of the hero or the heroine or the trend of the action of the play, which would otherwise remain unintelligible to the audience.

The fools in cap-and-bells enjoyed a brief life on the Tudor and Stuart Stage. To meet the demands of the Elizabethan audience even Marlowe, a rigid classicist, had scenes of clownage in his *Doctor Faustus*, though some of them are admittedly spurious. Marston has only two fools while Fletcher has three. But none of them comes near the wise fools of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's fools shine 'like bright metal on a sullen ground'.

9.10 Indiscriminate Use of Fools and Clown

The Elizabethans as well as Shakespeare appear to have used 'fool' and 'clown' indiscriminately. In fact Shakespeare has portrayed only three fools viz. Touchstone, Feste and the unnamed fool in *King Lear*. The other comic characters who may be described clowns, are Speed and Launce (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*) Launcelot Gobbo (*The Merchant of Venice*) the grave diggers (*Hamlet*), the clown who brings asps to Cleopatra (*Antony and Cleopatra*), and the porter in (*Macbeth*).

9.10.1 As You Like it

Touchstone of *As You Like it* is the first of Shakespeare's great fools, a professional wit and a humorist. He is the keen witted jester at Duke Frederick's court. As the Duke has observed, he uses his folly as "a stalking horse and under the presentation of it, he shoots his wits". Touchstone ridicules folly and affectation and remains a touchstone for all the other characters in the play. At court he burlesques the pompous court manners. In a play which would have been excessively sentimental, Touchstone brings in his own air of realism and parodic

Check Your Progress Questions

4 ____ act as links between the scenes

5 How many fools are there in his plays?

6 Who are they?

comment when the lovers go into rapturous extremes. He parodies Orlando's poems to Rosalind commenting that the tree on which it hung truly .... 'yields bad fruit'. He recalls (how he himself was head over heels in love with Jane Smiles and how he kissed the udders her chopped hands had milked). His wooing of Audrey and his marriage are realistic parody of the sentimental love of Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver. If the romantic lovers are dazzlingly handsome, Touchstone's sweet heart is 'an ill-favoured thing but mine own'. In his own outlandish fashion he dismisses her mild lover William with exaggerated threats to kill him in hundred different ways. His keen wit and good sense are discernable in his conversation with the rustic maid, Audrey.

Rosalind calls Touchstone 'the cutter of Nature's wit.' He tells Audrey that "honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey a sauce to sugar". To Jaques he says that 'As the ox has brow, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells; so man has his desires'. 'To have is to have passage' addressed to William, brings to light the philosophical profile of his character. His analysis of 'the quarrel upon the seventh cause on his coming face to face with the banished Duke is a hallmark of his professionalism. The forest or Arden is inconceivable without the witticism of Touchstone and we are lost in admiration for him. Though his role is slight, he is essential to the composition of the play.

9.10.2 Twelfth Night

Feste (*Twelfth Night*) is the merriest and the most popular fool in Shakespeare. He belongs to the household of Countess Olivia. As he himself says he is for all waters. All are at home in his company. He is eagerly welcomed by the love-sick Duke, the elegant Olivia, the drunken Sir Toby and the foolish Sir Andrew. Only Malvolio, the steward who is sick of self-love hates him. Feste is known for his verbal felicity and frequency of aphorisms. He is a shrewd and subtle psychologist and he always observes the mood of those on whom he jests. Viola alone of all characters, understands him properly.

As his very name implies he is the embodiment of the festive spirit of the comedy. As a corruptor of words he lets foolery walk about the orb like the sun and shine everywhere. When Olivia calls him 'a dry fool' he retorts that if the drink is given to him he won't be dry. With his usual quickness and ready wit he cleverly proves that Olivia is a fool. When, in an admonishing tone Maria says

that Olivia wants to hang him for his long absence, he welcomes it by saying that hanging prevents many a bad marriage. When she hints at his possible expulsion from the household he rather boastingly welcomes it by saying that it is good for summer. With high sounding expressions he easily impresses Sir Andrew.

When he meets Viola he impresses her by his quick repartee, free wit and jesting. When the latter likes to know whether he is Olivia's fool he says that Olivia has no fools and that she won't keep fools till she is married. Fools are like husbands as pilchards to herrings. He is the very quintessence of song and music. His singing of 'O Mistress mine' and the lovely song at the close of the play makes him especially attractive. He has a mellifluous voice and he always carries a tabor with him. He can sing with equal skill love songs, songs of good life, comic jigs and melancholy dirges. As Sir Topas, he counterfeits well. He is as witty as other fools are and feels that it is better to be a witty fool than a foolish wit.

9.10.3 King Lear

The fool in *King Lear* is one of the most remarkable of Shakespeare's creations. He has essentially a prominent role and he remains part and parcel of the play. Rightly does A.C. Bradley observe that "to remove him would spoil the harmony as the harmony of a picture would be spoil if one of the colours were extracted." Like other fools, he is known for his wit, penetration and the quick repartee." Admiring the wisdom of the fool, Kent says that 'He is not altogether a fool'. To Goneril and Regan he is an 'All licensed fool'. His dog - like fidelity and almost a blind devotion to his master keep him through thick and thin with him. When he tries his best to persuade the king to see sanity and withdraw from his foolish resolution of dividing his kingdom among his daughters, he assumes the role of a tragic Sancho Panza. J.M. Lothian says that "nothing is more marvelous than the way in which the truth both of head and heart is brought home to Lear through the medium of this despised and rejected among men". His speeches, full of disjointed images, snatches of songs and proverbs are the touchstone of the audience's reaction to the play's proceedings and here he reminds us of the chorus in Greek tragedies.

He is a shrewd judge of men and matters. He calls the king 'a fool' because he has given up all other titles. Noticing the behaviour of Goneril and Regan, he says that the cart has started drawing the horse. He points out to Lear that he has

become old before becoming wise. In his opinion Lear without his understanding and power of discernment is just his own shadow. Seeing the loneliness and helplessness of Lear, he comments on human nature in general by observing that the people who serve for gain, desert their master in difficulty. He says that though other wisemen leave, he remains with Lear for he is a fool. When Lear meets Edgar, the fool says that Edgar is better than he is because he has kept for himself at least a blanket. His first jingling song,

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest.

is an expression of the maxim 'Trust Nobody'. J.M. Lothian says that the fool is "closely related to the spiritual process and the meaning of the play. He plays the part of a confidant of the hero, to whom the hero turns for comment, advice and companionship. He walks beside him like a reflection of truth. He is Lear's fool and nobody else's".

9.10.4 All's Well that Ends Well

Lavache in *All's Well that Ends Well* is less amusing than Touchstone and Feste; but he is a realist like Touchstone. He is a clown in the service of the countess of Rousilion. Expressing his desire to marry Isabel because of lust - "My poor body, madam, require it/I am driven on by the desire of flesh", 'he delivers an elaborate justification of adultery and is consequently dismissed by his mistress as a 'foul mouthed and calumnious knave'. But in his absence she longs for an entertainment from her old jester. Even Parolles who scorns him admits that he is a witty fool. Like Touchstone he ironically comments on the behaviour of his betters by making use of himself and his mock love affair. He is a conscious humorist and unlike other fools his role bears a significant relationship to the theme of the play.

9.10.5 Two Gentleman of Verona

Launce's (*Two Gentleman of Verona*) taking a tearful leave of his dog, very much in parody of his master's sentimentalism, must have thrown the Elizabethan audience into a roar of laughter. Launcelot Gobbo of *The Merchant of Venice* is lovable. He is witty and humorous but everything with him pertains to

low life. His misuse of words - incarnation for incarnate, impertinent for pertinent - his palm reading and foretelling a glorious future and fortune for himself, his making love (presumed) to Jessica even after her marriage, etc. strongly recommend him for the title of a clown or a fool. He gives directions to his master's house in such a round about and confusing manner that it rouses laughter from the audience.

9.10.6 Much Ado About Nothing

In *Much Ado About Nothing* the blundering constable Dogberry and his assistant Verges are delightful comic creations. Dogberry's peculiarity is his malapropism before Mrs. Malaprop was born. When he exclaims in wounded pride, 'Put me down an ass' the audience roar with laughter. Their bombastic expressions, tedious periphrases and unrelieved stupidity irritate Leonato but amuse the audience. When Shakespeare came to write the later romances he kept the clown and the fool out.

9.10.7 Other Plays

Autolycus of *The Winter's Tale* is an exception; he is neither a clown nor a fool but partakes of the qualities of both. The Shepherd's son is called a clown and his blundering utterances are a source of amusement. Shakespeare paid scant respect to the neo-classical structures on the mixing of princes and peasants in the same play. He was disregardful of Sidney's fulminations against the mongrel tragicomedy, and the scenes of clownage in serious plays. He introduced comic characters even in his tragedies to heighten by contrast the pathos of his plays or to provide comic relief from tragic tension. The grave diggers in *Hamlet* and the porter in *Macbeth* provide a good deal of fun. He introduced a clown to bring asps to Cleopatra. Very few readers of Othello remember the clown who makes a brief appearance. Enobarbus acts as un-official fool and may be taken as a substitute for clown.

> **Check Your Progress Questions**
>
> 7 Who is the most popular fool in Shakespeare?
>
> 8 In Shakespeare's tragedies, comic characters provide ____

9.11 Summary

The variety of the fools in Shakespeare's plays indicate not only his own insight into the various springs of humour but also his observation of the various

types of persons who are capable of expressing their humorous spirit in their own typical ways which can be clearly distinguished from one another. A chronicle survey of his plays reveals how the comic scenes and comic characters are more and more organically related to the main story and how they are purged of their grossness and vulgarity. We the modern audience, miss the mirth and flashes of insight which the Elizabethan audience were lucky enough to enjoy in the theatre.

9.12 Questions

1. Account for the popularity of Fools in Shakespeare's plays.
2. Do you find any fundamental differences between the fool of Shakespearean comedy and the fool of Shakespearean tragedy.

9.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. follis **2**. clod **3**.Richard Tarleton **4**. Fun makers **5**.Three
6.Touchstone, Feste, unnamed fool in *King Lear* **7**.Feste **8**. comic relief

9.14 Further Reading

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UNIT 9 B

Space for Hints

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

9.1 Introduction

The sonnets by Shakespeare is a collection of 154 sonnets. W.H. Auden correctly remarks that the sonnets are the best touchstones to distinguish between love of poetry for its own sake, and love of poetry for other considerations. Opinions differ regarding (1) the date of composition of the sonnets (2) the arrangement of the sonnets, and (3) the establishment of the identities of Mr. W.H. and the Dark Lady.

9.2Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- how Shakespeare writes to the needs of his age
- Sonnets as an allegory

9.3Unit Structure

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Unit Objectives

9.3 Unit Structure

9.4 Date

9.5 Arrangement

9.6 Identity of Mr. W.H. and The Dark Lady

9.7 The Rival Poet

9.8 Sources

9.9 Comments

9.10 Interpretations

9.11 As An Allegory

9.12 Theme of Time

9.13 Questions

9.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.15 Further Reading

9.4 Date

The first reference to a collection of Shakespeare's sonnets appears in Francis Mere's list in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598). In it the author refers to the poet's

"sugared sonnets among his private friends". This establishes the fact that Shakespeare should have written these sonnets prior to the publication of *Palladis Tamia* in 1598.

The writing of sonnet - sequence was in great vogue between 1592 and 1595. Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) was immensely popular. Probably Shakespeare started writing sonnets following the current fashion.

9.5 Arrangement

Thomas Thorpe, the first publisher of the Sonnets in the year 1609, has divided the sequence into two unequal divisions; Sonnets 1 to 126 addressed to a young man, probably the poet's patron and friend and Sonnets 127 to 154 addressed to a Dark Lady. The order of sonnets does not appear to be chronological. There are some sonnets that do not belong to this sequence at all; they contain entirely different thoughts.

But Middleton Murry is of the opinion that the order of the sonnets is roughly chronological and that the story divides itself into five fairly well marked phases. (1) Shakespeare solicits his patron to marry and beget heirs. The acquaintance develops into a deep love and devotion, wherein the poet is conscious of his inferior position. (2) This refers to a period of absence, when the poet's young friend took occasion to steal Shakespeare's mistress from him. (3) The poet, back to his friend, does not feel the old security. He is acutely conscious of his old age. He is obsessed with the idea of Death and the invincibility of time. (4) The rival poet appears. The patron does not seem to distinguish between Shakespeare and the rival poet. He knows that his love for the youth is deeper than any consideration of advantage. (5) The poet submits himself to the patron with all humility, but there is a lordliness on Shakespeare's part and the tone is that of an independent man.

These five phases belong to the "Southampton Sequence" and the 'Dark Lady Sequence' forms a separate division.

9.6 Identity of Mr. W.H. and The Dark Lady

The dedicatory note signed by Thomas Thorpe in the volume of poems, has raised many speculations regarding the identity of Mr. W.H. The chief names suggested are,

i) William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke.

ii) Hentry Wriothsely, Third Earl of Southampton [with initials reversed]

iii) William Hall, a piratical printer.

iv) William Hervey, step father of the Earl of Southampton.

v) William Hathaway, Shakespeare's brother-in-law.

vi) William Hughes (Hewes) who has been variously identified.

vii) William Himself.

Similarly, there are many conjectures regarding the identity of the Dark Woman. George Chalmers originated the quaint theory that Shakespeare addressed all the sonnets to Queen Elizabeth. Some critics say that the sonnets were commissioned by the Earl of Southampton to serve as gifts to his mistress. G.B. Harrison asserts that the Dark Lady was a courtesan of notoriety, a certain Negro Lady. Some include the name of Mrs. Jane Devenant, the wife of an Oxford tavern owner. Some believe her to be Mistress Mary Fitton, while some others hold the woman to be a creature of the poet's imagination, like Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost.* It is not improbable that she was Shakespeare's own mistress.

9.7 The Rival Poet

Sonnets 78 to 86, with the exception of 81 are concerned with other poets and apparently with the one poet in particular, who had been writing verses praising Shakespeare's young friend. The identity of "The Rival Poet" like the identity of Mr. W. H. or the Dark Lady, has also been the subject of much critical wrangling. Some critics consider Christopher Marlowe, as the Rival Poet and they base their arguments on Sonnet 86. They point out that the first line of the sonnet 'the proud full saile of his great verse' exactly describes the poetic style of Marlowe's "mighty lines" and the allusion to the supernatural assistance, refers to his great dramatic creation *Dr. Faustus*, and the "affable familiar 'ghost" to Mephistopheles in the play. A.L.Rowse in his William Shakespeare (1963) accepts Marlowe as the Rival Poet, claiming a close identity between Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. But the first line of Sonnet 86, if taken at its face value, could also apply to George Chapman or Spenser, since Marlowe was killed in 1593, too early a date to assign to the

Check Your Progress Questions

1.How many sonnets are written by Shakespeare?

2.Thomas Thorpe has divided the sonnet sequence into ___ ___

sonnets. Samuel Daniel is another claimant because Shakespeare is thought to have found inspiration in Daniel's poems.

George Chapman is favoured by many critics, because he is the best claimant fitting the description of the rival poet. His *Homer* contained dedicatory sonnets to Southampton and Pembroke. His translation of the first 7 books of the *Iliad* in the 14 syllabled rhyme lines was certainly 'great verse' speaking out 'loud and boldly'. Chapman's *The Shadow of the Night* is referred to in the sonnet as 'his compeers by night'. Chapman asserted that the spirit or anima of Homer used to come to him in a vision and prompted him while he was at work translating the *Iliad.* Probably, Shakespeare is jestingly referring to this spirit as 'affable familiar Ghost'.

Throughout the sequence Shakespeare talks indirectly of the works of other poets, who, he fears are superseding him in his patron's favour. Sonnet 76 is significant in this connection. Critics conclude that the phrases like "new-found methods" and "compounds strange" aptly describe John Donne's early metaphysical poems and thus make him another claimant for the title of the Rival Poet. Other candidates suggested are Ben Jonson, Michael Drayton. Barnabe Barnes and Gervase Markham.

9.8 Sources

The sonnet form was in vogue then, at the time of Shakespeare, both in England and Europe. Petrarch its originator had popularized *Canzoniere* composed of 317 sonnets. Almost all the sonnets are addressed to a half-real, half-ideal lady, whom he named Laura. Shakespeare could not have read Petrarch in Italian but must have been acquainted with the translations by Wyatt and Surrey. Sir Philip Sidney's "*Astrophel and Stella*" could have also influenced Shakespeare. Some critics find a stronger influence on the poet from Samuel Daniel's "*Delia.*"

Apart from these sonneteers, it is clear that Shakespeare was greatly influenced by Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Arthur Golding's translation. Among the conventions originating in Ovid and in Horace and also present in Petrarch. Shakespeare often exploits the "eternizing" theme. The idea is that the poet's praise of his patron confers upon the aristocrat, earthly immortality. This is the only sure protection from the destruction of time. About thirteen of Shakespeare's sonnets contain this theme. He announces in Sonnet 55:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme.

Mutability regarded from a different point of view is "The Triumph of Time". The word 'Triumph' calls to mind the ancient Roman custom of conducting colourful triumphal processions. Petrarch created visionary imitations of these pageants, that of Chastity, of Death, of Time and of Eternity. Shakespeare glorifies only one of these triumphs that of Time. His sonnets are largely evidences of his obsession with the themes of time and mutability.

Many modern critics assume that the sonnet-sequence is autobiographical and find in it a terse little drama involving three persons: a poet, his Friend, a lord of high degree; and a woman, a brunette, known as the Dark Lady. The first seventeen sonnets by the poet to the young aristocrat urge the young man to marry and beget heirs. The 'embassage' establishes an acquaintance with the boyish lord that soon ripens into an ardent friendship. The sequence records the irritations as well as the triumphs of this relationship. One of its most critical trials is the rivalry of another poet, who tries to win the favor of the poet's Lord - Friend. Yet another crisis is that the handsome and licentious lord steals the poet's mistress. The poet comes to know of the treachery of his mistress and his friend, but he excuses his friend, magnanimously. But that does not prevent him from bitterly attacking the lady's deceit. In the end, the poet breaks all ties with her. The friendship between the poet and the Friend is rejuvenated.

9.9 Comments

Many convincing arguments and theories have been forwarded by critics regarding the sonnets:

1) They are poems about an imaginary friendship and love. 2) They are partly imaginary and party autobiographical 3) They are a great allegory 4) They are fully autobiographical. 5) They reveal the poet's unnatural love for a man. W.H. Auden dismisses all these theories established by the critics but affirms that "the primary experience out of which the sonnets to the friend spring is a mystical one created by the vision of Eros".

The Sonnets belong to the tradition of Renaissance poetry celebrating beauty and love. But the happy truth is that Shakespeare has liberated more than half of his sonnets from the tiresome Petrachan conventions, like, luxuriating in

the woe of a rejected suitor. He tunes new notes in his sonnets. The most striking of the poet's innovations is his confession that his attraction to the Dark Lady is mere sensuality, followed by repulsion and remorse. In these sacred sonnets, Shakespeare transcends the world of thought and feeling, in which his contemporaries live and move. They finally establish a spiritual principle - the Realisation of self.

According to Dowden, we recognize in the Sonnets 1) that Shakespeare was capable of measureless devotion 2) that he was tenderly sensitive to the minutest point 3) that when wronged although he suffered anguish, he transcended his private injury and learned to forgive.

9.10 Interpretations

The first 126 sonnets of the sequence are addressed to a friend a fair youth, and the other 28 to a dark-lady. These two groups constitute 'Shakespeare's early expression of his perceptions of friendship, of love and lust, of honour, of growth through experience of sin and expiation, of mutability, plenitude, and the knowledge of good and evil. The sonnets, of course, are wrought in the traditional and conventional way, but they record the poet's genuine experiences of what was happening to his inner self during this period, particularly of his love and friendship.

Love and courtship stood at the very foundation of the sonnet tradition and they were the *leit motifs* of the Renaissance poetry. Friendship was not quite excluded, but it was only a subsidiary theme. Shakespeare went against the tradition and awarded the place of prime importance to the theme of friendship. The love-sonnets only 28 in number, if they can be called so because they address a lady, have been relegated to a secondary place. These sonnets are "a kind of sub-plot to the main series". They are written indeed to a lady, "but a lady by courtesy title only, as black as hell, as dark as night, who was held to blame for corrupting both the poet and his friend. In its negation of conventional values, this second series defied tradition even more out-spokenly than the first". (Lever)

There are certainly personal reasons for Shakespeare to attach much importance to the theme of friendship. The fair youth of the sonnets was a gentleman of high rank. Friendship between young men of noble minds was a theme of Renaissance literature and philosophy, the basis being Plato's thoughts.

Plato in his *Symposium* distinguished between two sorts of love: common love and heavenly love. The former was physical and selfish. According to Plato, heavenly love could spring up between men; it would be rational and not physical and conducive to spiritual development. The love of a noble nature is constant and endured throughout one's life. Another quality of the heavenly love is that one who loves wants to be indissolubly united with the beloved. The heavenly love begins with admiration of physical beauty, and with falling in love with a particular beautiful person, and proceeds to the love of beauty itself. The lover contemplates on the beauty of the soul which is more valuable than the beauty of the body. By mediating on this eternal spiritual beauty (for beauty is an 'absolute', one substance which all beautiful things partake of) one will be in contact not with its reflection in particular things or people, but with truth itself. Shakespeare realized such a heavenly love for the fair youth, through which he was striving hard to see the very core of the truth itself. But some critics have cried this love down as the homosexual tendency in the poet.

Shakespeare was keenly alive to the spiritual needs of his age, which determined the choice of his major theme. The Elizabethan age had a dual vision: it could see order and harmony in nature and also decay and transformation. Similarly, love too was seen as an example of cosmic harmony, of the biological impulse to increase and also as a struggle of the male and the female principles for supremacy. Shakespeare could express this dual vision in his plays by incarnating it in various characters. In the sonnets, he expressed it through a transformation of the central theme. The patron friend had been given the place of mistress of the romance tradition and the mistress, the Dark Lady, was relegated to a subsidiary role. By doing so, he was able to resolve the major dilemma of the Elizabethan sonneteer. By this fusion he brought together the Elizabethan dual vision and Platonic principle.

The dark-Lady sonnets are a subordinate series and they show the negative aspects of the erotic experience and also, how far sensuality does lead a person towards psychic disintegration. The mistress is an evil influence and establishes a clandestine affair with the fair youth. The poet cannot tolerate this. So, like a genuine lover, he advises his friend to get rid of the Dark Lady, in the most lovely poetical utterances.

Check Your Progress Questions

3______ are addressed to a friend a fair youth

4 The other ____ are addressed to a dark lady

5 ______ is the very foundation of the sonnet tradition

Thus, Shakespeare presents a drama in his sequence with three protagonists caught in a love-knot.

9.11 As An Allegory

Most critics are of the view that the sonnets are partly autobiographical, and partly allegorical. G. Wilson Knight observes that "Shakespeare led a life of allegory" and the sonnets are "a semi-dramatic expression of a clearly defined process of integration, pointing towards the realisation of a high state of being". Wilson Knight does not talk about identity of the fair youth and the dark lady, though he believes that there were two such persons. According to the critic, they were the Apollonian and Dionysian pulls in the poet's life, and these ministered to the poet's own innate 'bisexual' urges. Because of this urge only, the critic affirms that Shakespeare was able to create strong and lovable female characters like Viola, Portia, Cleopatra, Rosalind etc, in his plays.

Apollo is a figure of masculine beauty and Dionysius is an effeminate god. The Fair youth is continually realised in visual terms. He is an Apollonian conception. The Dark-Lady is repellent, but exerts a fascination from which both the poet and his friend cannot escape. This magnetic attraction eludes intellectual definitions. The Dark-Lady approximates to the Dionysian conception of life. These two conceptions are the root principles of Nietzsche's *Birth of a Tragedy*, in which the Dionysian concept stands for music and the Apollonian for epic, as opposed to dramatic poetry. The aim of the artist must always be the blending of these two root principles. These fuse successfully in Shakespeare and find an apt expression in the Sonnet Sequence.

Mark Van Doren is of the view that "the beloved person is in fact his own poetry", and the subject matter of the sonnets is "the greatest possible subject, existence". The Dark Lady is the other material comforts of the world, that lure him from his poetic world. There is yet another view that the young friend might be the Ideal Manhood: Another interpretation is that Shakespeare in the sonnets is exploring though the mythical figures of the dark woman, the false rival and the fair friend, the myriad circles and slopes of Hell and Purgatory, hewing a pathway to the ultimate Paradise.

Whatever be the interpretations, the poet was well-aware of the conflicts between good and evil, love and hate, transcience and eternity. The sonnets are attempts to express them.

9.12 Theme of Time

L.C. Knights helps the reader to a proper understanding of the theme. "The sense of life's tragic issues comes to different men in different ways; one of the ways in which it came to Shakespeare is not uncommon; it was simply a heightened awareness of what the mere passage of time does to man and all created things. There are many sonnets which show the impact of time and mutability on a nature endowed with an uncommon capacity for delight." This idea is almost an obsession with Shakespeare; in *Twelfth Night*. Viola pleads with Olivia to perpetuate her beauty:

Lady, you are the, cruelest she alive
If you will lead these graces to the grave,
And leave the world no copy.

One cannot dismiss this as a common place conceit of traditional nature. Obsession with Time is, of course, a Renaissance idea. But Shakespeare extends the idea by speaking of stewardship of God's gifts by Man. Beauty and intellectual eminence must not be allowed to fade; man holds his possession in trust; he is the steward and not the owner of his excellence. Sonnet LX presents the problem with the clarity of immediacy.

And time that gave doth now his gift confound;
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow

The poet is engaged in the imaginative evocation of the irreversible processes of Time. Time can be conquered by love and art of poetry. Shakespeare asserts the supremacy of love:

Love is not time's fool though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come..

But the aggressiveness of the early part reveals that the passage does not offer an insight, which as all insights are, must be axiomatic. The misgivings are more

truthfully portrayed in describing increasing store with loss, and loss with store, in the world of Nature, hungry ocean gaining the shore and the firm soil win of watery main. The poet confesses:

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate
That time will come and take my love away. (LXIV)

One is not surprised that such doubts must cast gloom in a world of interchange of state.

the continent,
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
Into the sea. (*Henry IV* ii)

So a rhetorical flourish becomes necessary to defy the ruthless omnipotence of Time:

'Gainst death, and all - oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom,
So, till the judgement that your self arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lover's eyes. (L V)

That Fame achieved by immortalizing an individual in poetry is a time-worn convention. The poet can eternalize summer, evoke an earthy paradise by writing 'eternal lines.' But, as J.W. Lever perceptively observes, yet even the eternity depends on the continuity of the human race.

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (XVIII)

For in these sonnets mankind is, in the last analysis, the sale tribunal of all values. The flower fragrance image is a reiterative pattern to emphasize this theme. It is first suggested in

Making a couplement of proud compare
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems (XXI)

The 'canker in the bud' image employed by Viola in *Twelfth Night* is found in the lines,

Clouds and eclipses doth stain moon and sun

And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud. (XXXV)

Tucker offers a subtle meaning that sweeter the bud, the more readily the canker chooses it. In *Two Gentleman Of Verona* -one finds a similar idea:

Yet writers say, as in sweetest bud
The eating canker dwell, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

The most important passage is

The rose looks fair, but fairer, we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live (LIV)

Which reminds one of the similar lines '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*':

But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
That that which, withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

The flower-image is apt when employed in association with the soft delicate feminine charm of the patron; besides the hackneyed thought that flowers wither but fragrance does linger is at least suitable to illustrate survival of fame after the short span of life.

9.13 Questions

1. Write an essay on Shakespeare's handling of the sonnet form.
2. "The sonnets of Shakespeare present a tantalising fragment of an autobiography" - Discuss.
3. Examine the chief themes dealt with in the sonnets of Shakespeare.

9.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. 154 **2.** 1 to 126, 127 to 154 **3.** The first 126 sonnets
4.28 sonnets **5.** love and courtship

9.15 Further Reading

Booth, Stephen. *An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1969.

Martin, Philip. *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Self, Love and Art.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972.

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UNIT - 10

Space for Hints

CONTRIBUTION TO SHAKESPEARE CRITICISM BY DR. JOHNSON, A.C. BRADLEY AND WILSON KNIGHT

10.1 INTRODUCTION

It is extremely difficult to comprehend the greatness of Shakespeare unaided. The diverse views of critics often help us to understand him better. In the history of the criticism of Shakespeare, which is both literary and dramatic there is a constant progress as a result of improved texts, increase in the knowledge about the conditions of the Elizabethan stage, the life of Shakespeare himself and the times in which he lived. But still Shakespeare criticism will always change as times change.

10.2. Objectives

- To make the students understand Shakespearean criticism
- To make them analyse Johnson's views
- To make them analyse A.C.Bradley's views
- To make them analyse G.Wilson Knight's views

10.3. Structure

10.1. Introduction

10.2. Objectives

10.3. Structure

10.4 Shakespearean criticism before Dryden

10.5 Shakespearean criticism after Dryden

10.6 A brief analysis of the *Preface*

10.7 Criticism on Johnson's Views

10.8 A.C. Bradley

10.9 G. Wilson Knight

10.10 Questions

10.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.12 Further Reading

10.4 Shakespearean criticism before Dryden

There were many critics of Shakespeare who were his very contemporaries. These men were too near to the object to see it clearly or in perspective, though they enjoyed the advantage of a freshness unspoilt by generation of other mens views. Among them, Ben Jonson is best remembered. His opinion had a peculiar interest since he was himself a dramatist and poet quite different from Shakespeare. Dryden, a dramatist as well as a critic of the next century, is often considered the father of Shakespearean criticism. Though he disguised his veneration at times, he expressed his true faith when he wrote, deliberately, the fervent estimate in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy.* His Shakespearean criticism was in a special sense dramatic too.

With the eighteenth century, there came a change and criticism became literary rather than dramatic. Though adaptations of Shakespeare plays by Dryden and many others held the stage, the criticism was of the plays as written by Shakespeare. In other words, Shakespeare was beginning to be more read than seen upon the stage; "he was gradually detached from his environment, from other dramatists, and from a time which had become unfamiliar". Besides, the standard of scholarship and editorship was rising.

10.5 Shakespearean criticism after Dryden

After the critical essay of Dryden, the *Preface to Shakespeare* by Samuel Johnson is the next of the great pieces of criticism that deserves serious consideration. Johnson's emotional involvement with Shakespeare began in his boyhood. In his ninth year, while reading *Hamlet* in the basement kitchen of his home, he was so much affected by the ghost scene that he had to rush out to see real people around. At another time, he was so much shocked at the death of Cordelia in *King Lear* that he could not read the scene for several years. During his early years of his career, he wished to bring out an edition of Shakespeare's works since he was not satisfied with the edition of Rowe, Pope or Theobald. In 1745 he published *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth* to show what he could do in the field of Shakespearean scholarship.

At the back of this pamphlet was a sheet of 'Proposals' for printing a new edition of all the plays of Shakespeare. Copyright rules stood in the way and the idea had to be given up. In 1755 he revived his plan, and in June 1756 he issued

detailed proposals for a new edition of Shakespeare to be published by December 1757. Finally, the work was completed only in October 1765 in a set of eight volumes. The *Preface* running to sixty eight pages in the original edition ensured Johnson's place among the major Shakespearean critics. Johnson embodies in one admirably written essay, all the major problems which had engaged the attention of the earlier critics. Many of these problems are still relevant.

10.6 A brief analysis of the Preface:

The *Preface* easily falls into seven parts: Shakespeare considered as a poet of nature; defence of tragi-comedy; Shakespeare's style: his faults; the attack upon the 'unites'; the historical background of his plays and the various editorial methods. Johnson is of the view that there is a common tendency to reverence the ancient writers without question and that a living author often is judged by his worst work, and an ancient author, by his best. Public appreciation, if given to a work for a long period, implies an agreement on the part of readers for generations. Such an agreement is infallible. Johnson considers such agreement among readers and long continued popularity as test of greatness. Shakespeare qualifies by this test of greatness. He is above all a poet of nature holding 'a faithful mirror of manners and of life'. Johnson accepts the neo-classical view of art as imitation of general nature and finds this illustrated in the case of Shakespeare. His characters are governed by 'general passions and principles'. The plays provide 'practical axioms and domestic wisdom' which are found dispersed throughout the play. Not exoticism but realism permeates his plays. Unlike the modern dramatists, Shakespeare does not give primacy to one passion alone - to love alone. Characters are clearly individualized. They are natural. In this sense Shakespeare has no heroes. He brings the remote near and the wonderful, familiar. Imaginary actions are made to appear real. The language and sentiments of the characters reflect the actual world. Johnson refers to the criticisms levelled against Shakespeare's characters, by Dennis, Rhymer and Voltaire as 'the petty cavils of petty minds' because they do not pay heed to Shakespeare's depiction of universal characters.

Johnson proceeds to justify the mixture of the serious and the comic. Although the classical writers kept them separate, this practice need not be considered a sacred rule because in real life comedy and tragedy co-exist.

Moreover, the distinction between comedy and tragedy and history is an artificial one and so Shakespeare does not violate any serious rule. He achieves his purpose fully: 'as he commands us, we laugh on mourn'. Johnson also observes that Shakespeare is more at home with comedies than with tragedies: 'his tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct'. The naturalness and appeal of his comedies has withstood the test of time while the comedies of many others have been forgotten:

Johnson makes a few observation about Shakespeare's style. It is neither modish nor pedantic. His comic dialogues especially, seem to have been derived from 'the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to the understood, without ambition of elegance'. His style is therefore, more agreeable than any other authors equally remote. He is one of the original masters of the language.

Johnson then specifies a number of faults of Shakespeare. His chief charge against Shakespeare is his lack of moral purpose. "He sacrifices virtue to convenience and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose . His plots are often 'loosely formed' and his fifth acts carelessly huddled up. Anachronisms abound. He is too prone to quibbling and playing on words. His comic wit is often gross and licentious; his tragic speeches strained, and his narrative passages inflated. Johnson is uncomfortable about Shakespeare's failures to satisfy poetic justice: the destruction of Claudius, a usurper and a murderer, affords him 'gratification', but the death of innocents like Ophelia and Cordelia pains him.

Shakespeare has shown no regard to the unities of time and place. Neglect of the unities is not enumerated among the defects because Johnson thinks that excepting the unity of action the others are not important or necessary for artistic excellence. In the history plays, Shakespeare's infringement of the unity of action itself is not wrong. Johnson explains that if it is remembered that drama itself is an illusion, it is easy for the spectators to imagine the scenes shifting from Alexandria to Rome or from boyhood to youth. Johnson stoutly defends with remarkable clarity, Shakespeare's technique of drama: 'the delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more". Johnson also points out that Shakespeare's

comedies are more powerful on the stage than in the page, and his tragedies are powerful when read than acted.

Johnson further observes that Shakespeare's borrowings of plots from popular contemporary authors and his crowdings of episodes in his plays are concessions to the unsophisticated Elizabethan audience. Like Homer, Shakespeare alone could excite curiosity and hold it to the end. His immense learning come more from life than from books. He excelled in characterization and dialogue. In his characters once can see like Chaucer's 'god's plenty' touched by native colours. His works abound in maxims of theoretical knowledge and rules of practical prudence. His poetry possesses for the first time in English, extraordinary smoothness and harmony. Johnson points out how Shakespeare's aim was more to please his audience than to perfect his plays. He little cared about future fame and hence neglected publication of his play during his lifetime.

Many of the texts that appeared during Shakespeare's time, Johnson remarks, were clandestine editions and most of his plays were published seven years after his death. They were highly corrupt having been copied by unskillful copyists; sometimes actors mutilated for the sake of shortening the speeches. Johnson then lists various editions and makes an assessment of each of them: Rowe, Pope, Theobald, Hanmer and Warburton. Johnson admits that he has not done a thorough job of collating all available copies. He took liberty in punctuating the text, giving as his reason that it is more honourable to save a citizen than to kill an enemy: He was cautious in practising conjecture, and wherever he did conjecture, he printed the changes on the margin without injuring the text. Johnson humbly admits that "in many I have failed like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated and confessed the repulse". He concludes the Preface by quoting the magnificent tribute paid by Dryden to Shakespeare.

Check Your Progress Questions

1 ____ is considered as the father of Shakespearean criticism

2 ____ is the next of Shakespearean criticism '

3 Johnson's ____ is a major essay in theoretical criticism

10.7 Criticism on Johnson's Views:-

The Preface is essentially a brilliant piece of descriptive criticism containing a major essay in theoretical criticism. In as much as it is strictly impersonal, treating the plays as objects proves Johnson's Shakespearian criticism is close to neo - classical norms. And the gist of his praises of Shakespeare the reasons he gives for elevating him is the same. Shakespeare is the 'poet of nature' -

that is, of human nature. His 'drama is the mirror of life'. He shows human life as it is, presenting 'human sentiments' in 'human language'. "In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare, it is commonly a species" - such a remark is the height of praise from a classical stand point. Hence the *Preface* is Neo - classical, in its praise of Shakespeare's truth to general nature and also in its preference for broad philosophical generalization which has no truck with historicity. When Johnson finds it necessary to defend Shakespeare's neglect of the three unities, he does not go along historical lines, by saying that Shakespeare's was working in a popular medium which had not heard of the Italian Renaissance critics who had refined his basic premises and hardened them into directives. Such a pleading would have seemed to Johnson no defence but a mere excuse. Instead, he defends Shakespeare by a direct appeal to the nature of imaginative literature - what it is and why it affects us. We are moved by imaginative literature he says, because we identify ourselves with the situation we find there. Hence we revere a major writer because we feel that he knows us: We can read his work and find there the materials for self knowledge. Moreover Johnson points out that Shakespeare possessed 'uniformity of sentiment' - the power of feeling our normal human - emotions at a greater depth and intensity so that to meet them again in his pages is beneficial, an enhancement of life. This part of Johnson's estimate is also along familiar neo-classical lines. It is very similar to Dryden's eulogy of Shakespeare in his *Essay of Dramatic poesy.*

But his opposition to neo-classical prescriptive criticism is based on sound common sense as seen in his defence of Shakespeare's practice of mixing comedy and tragedy. He gives a sound reason: that the limitations imposed by rules are partial and arbitrary. T.S. Eliot explains the point perfectly: "Johnson perceived though not explicitly, that the distinctions of tragic and comic are superficial for us; though he did not know how important they were for the Greeks; for he did not know that they sprang from a difference in ritual". Johnson's argument is logical and sensible as he explains that the object of poets' activity is always nature; which means, a new and original poet can directly follow nature according to his own sensibility and still satisfy the readers by giving pleasure. Hence the precepts derived from ancient poets are arbitrary rather than universal in application. Since nature offers unlimited choices to a poet, those who condemn the mixing of the comic and the tragic scenes in Shakespeare fail to understand that in real life too

such elements co - exist. Though some poets may restrict themselves to a part of the diverse whole, it is wrong, says Johnson, to impose such restriction on all poets. His common sense further adds the observation that "perception is a truer guide in this matter than speculative principles.

Johnson castigates Shakespeare for what he regards as excessive use of puns. His objection derives from the separation of wit and judgement insisted upon by Addison and first developed by Hobbes and Locke. This passion however was only a passing phase in Shakespeare. Conceit and simile gave way to metaphor. Ornaments becomes functional and organic in the mature plays. Moreover Shakespeare was destined to play with words by his age and education. Word-play was a serious game with the Elizabethans. Johnson's 'great contempt for that species of wit' was the outcome of the linguistic revolution that separated Johnson's verbal habit from Shakespeare's. It was the result of the Augustan cult of correctness and right expression. Modern criticism of Shakespeare recognizes word play as a major poetic device. The propriety of a pun lies in the ear of the listener. Moreover Shakespeare's own observation and experience served to show him when and how people quibbled.

In Johnson's treatment of Shakespeare in the *Preface* three inconsistencies can be seen: justification of tragic - comedy on conflicting grounds; the supreme poet of nature in the early part of the *Preface* dwindling into an unendurable playwright at a later part, and the poet of central style attenuated to one of weak declamation. Some of Johnson's historical judgements are naive as for example: "The English nation, in the time of Shakespeare was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity, and "Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources to unfold the seminal principles of voice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action." How very wrong this is, is shown by Lily. B. Campbell in her book "*Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes*".

Johnson's account of the work of earlier editors in his *Preface* is the first attempt of its kind which is impartial. He shows how Rowe has been blamed for not performing what he did not undertake; he is severe on Pope for the allusion to the 'dull duty of an editor' as well as for the performance of it, though he also finds much to praise; he does more justice to Sir Hammer than has commonly been done since; and he is not silent on the weaknesses of Warburton. The only thing in

this unprejudiced account which is liable to criticism is his treatment of Theobald. His censure is as just as his praise; for Johnson is careful to state that 'what little he did, was commonly right'.

Throughout his work, Johnson's moral concern is evident. His favourite moral theme is the effort of the mind to escape from the limitations to the actual. The configuration of his moral sensitivity is thus his strength and his weakness. His Augustan mind betrays its limitations when it confronts Shakespeare's dramatic language. Prof.F.R.Leavis points out how Johnson was incapable of appreciating "the poetic - creative use of language - the use by which the stuff of experience is presented to speak and act for itself". He further adds that "for Johnson a moral judgement that isn't stated isn't there". Here we have the essential tendency of the Augustan traditions - to turn forms and conventions from agents of life into debilitating conventionalities which suffocates the development of the individual sensibility and insulates any vitalizing recourse to the concrete.

Apart from his *Preface*, Johnson's notes on individual plays are interesting and enlightening. He has a good note on Polonius and draws a moral from Falstaff. The notes are interesting for three reasons. First they are rich specimen of that learned sport, developed during the Renaissance and enjoying its last full scale vogue in the eighteen century, of textual emendation. Second, they are dialectic. To Shakespearian position – on language, on style and expression, on morality on everything - they juxtapose a Johnsonian position. Thirdly, they stand at the beginning of a whole new tradition of Shakespearian criticism which after Johnson's death was to proliferate into a substantial literature of its own: the criticism of character. From the last years of the eighteenth century to the first decade of the twentieth, most critics of Shakespeare concerned themselves primarily with his analysis of character. Time and again Johnson has a terse, dankly - packed note on some stroke of characterization or a brief sketch of a whole character which reveals that he read Shakespeare with as much attention to the three dimensional presentation of men and women as Bradley or Granville Barker.

Johnson's *Preface* is remarkable not so much for what it says as for what it is, the judicial summing up of the opinion of a century; it is the impartial estimate of Shakespeare's virtues and defects by a powerful mind anxious not to prevent the defects as he saw them from weighing too lightly in the balance. It is the final

verdict of an epoch. It was this judicial attitude that Hazlitt interpreted as indifference; and which so infuriated him. T.S. Eliot seems nearer the truth when he says, after quoting the fifth para of the *Preface*: One would willingly resign the honour of an Abbey burial for the greater honour of words like the following from a man of the greatness of their author....What a valedictory and obituary for any man to receive! My point is that if you assume that the classical criticism of England was grudging in its praise of Shakespeare, I say that no poet can ask more of posterity than to be greatly honoured by the great; and Johnson's words about Shakespeare are great honour".

Johnson's unimpassioned estimate is the final summing up of the classical Shakespearian criticism of the hundred years that lie between the Restoration and the accession of George III. It is the verdict of the Age of Reason, of an age that willingly accepted the restrictions of 'rules' lest too great a freedom sho' ld lead to those mysterious and incomprehensible regions.

10.8 A.C. Bradley

When Dr. Johnson wrote his *Preface* romanticism had already begun to manifest

itself in the works of European writers. Consequently, French classical tragedy was rejected and Shakespeare was exacted above Corneille and Voltaire. The continental revolters against neo-classical regality often held up Shakespeare as its antithesis. In England, the full blown romantic idea of Shakespeare appeared only with Coleridge. But there were signs of altered emphasis even as early as the latter part of the eighteen century. It was even argued that Dr. Johnson's "sense of the inseparability of a man and his work marks him the first of our Romantic critics". Some of the writings of the period - William Richardson's *A Philosophical Analysis of some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters* and Maurice Morgan's *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* for example, point out to the growing interest in Shakespeare's characters as the aspect of his plays in which his excellence is most evident. S.T. Coleridge is one of the influential romantic critics of Shakespeare. Though his writings on Shakespeare are mostly desultory and unsystematic, they are nevertheless seminal and most subsequent criticism derives from them. Coleridge demands reverence for Shakespeare. He scorns the idea of untutored genius. Shakespeare's mind was 'a most profound, energetic and

Check Your Progress Questions

4 ___ of the influential romantic critics of Shakespeare

5 In the v ew of Coleridge, Shakespeare's great excellence is his ___

6 To Bradley, ___ is the crux of a Shakespearean tragedy

philosophical mind'. The form of his plays, Coleridge points out is not determined by mechanical rules, energetic and philosophical mind'. The form of his plays, Coleridge points out is not determined by mechanical rules, each one has organic form determined by its own nature. According to Coleridge, Shakespeare's greatest excellence is his portrayal of character. The plot interests us on account of the characters not vice versa: Coleridge also showed that Shakespeare's language is poetic and integral and not merely decorative. Many contemporaries of Coleridge engaged themselves with Shakespeare: Hazlitt in *Characters of Shakespeare's plays* (1817), De Quincy in *On the Knocking at the gate in 'Macbeth'*, and Landor in his *Imaginary Conversations*. The romantic critics divorced Shakespeare from the theatre or ignored the fact that he wrote plays. Charles Lamb pronounced the tragedies impossible to realize at their full potential on the stage; Carlyle laments "Alas! Shakespeare had to write for the Globe Play house: his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould". The romantic critics were divided in their opinion on one point: the presence of Shakespeare himself in his works. To Coleridge, 'Shakespeare's poetry does not reflect the individual Shakespeare'; To Schlegel it does. Edward Dowden whose work *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* exerted a pervasive influence for a quarter century, saw the plays as explorations of moral problems that oppressed Shakespeare in his private life. He divides Shakespeare's career into four periods and labelled them "In the workshop", "In the world" "Out of the depths" and "On the heights". Thus the nineteenth century invented the oracular Shakespeare who created characters embodying the deepest insights into human nature. His artistry was taken for granted, or examined only when it could be used to reinforce the picture of him as a seer. Shakespeare is the poet rather than playwright and the poet included the philosopher'. The weakness of nineteenth century criticism if it is agreed that Shakespeare was a supreme oracle, was its tendency to ignore the text in order to write philosophical and moralistic speculations in the margin. The writings of A.C. Bradley (who was greatly influenced by Edward Dowden) maybe considered the last and best of the romantic school of critics. They are of limited scope: a book on *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), which discusses *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear*, essays on The Rejection of Falstaff (1902) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1906) and a

lecture on *Coriolanus* (1912). Bradley's prestige nevertheless has been very great and is deserved. The book is highly intelligent, conscientious, and suavely written.

Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) is based on an interpretative 'study of Shakespeare's characters. The book is a collection of Bradley's lectures on Shakespeare delivered in his capacity as professor of English at the University of Liverpool. At the outset of his lectures on Shakespearian tragedy, he affirms his belief that with native strength and justice of perception and the habit of reading with an eager mind, an unscholarly lover of Shakespeare might be a better critic than many a Shakespeare scholar. "Imaginative vision" his own phrase - correctly describes Bradley's discovery of Shakespeare. His main concern is to show the link between drama and poetry and what he understands by action and personages. Bradley believes that the world of a play is a world of causal law and of determined inevitable consequence, just like the world of reality; for him, the organization of a play is in essence the same as the rational causal order of experience.

Bradley made a careful study of the four major tragedies of Shakespeare and deduced the characteristics of a Shakespearean tragedy. A Shakespearean tragedy, according to him, is pre - eminently the story of one person or, two equality important persons - for instance the love tragedies of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is a story which leads up to and includes the death of the hero. It is a tale of suffering and calamity conducting to death. The suffering and calamity are exceptional and befall a conspicuous person. Such suffering affecting the hero generally extends far and wide beyond him so as to make the whole scene, a scene of woe and provides thereby the chief source of the tragic emotion of pity. Shakespeare's tragic heroes are men of 'high degree' - kings, princes, leaders of state, General of a Republic etc. Hence, the fate of the hero affects the welfare of a whole nation or empire. His fall produces a sense of contrast of what he was and what he is now; of the powerlessness of man and the omnipotence of Fate or Fortune. The calamities do not simply happen, nor are they sent. They proceed mainly from actions of men. These deeds are not done unconsciously or in half-consciousness, between sleep and wakefulness. The deeds done or omitted are expressive of the doer - "characteristic deeds", - deeds issuing from the character of the doer. The cooperation of the character and circumstance gives rise to certain action, which in turn triggers off a series of such

actions leading to the final catastrophe. The hero contributes in a large measure to disaster in which he perishes. To say that 'character is destiny' in Shakespeare may be an exaggeration, but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth.

Bradley points out how occasionally Shakespeare represents abnormal conditions of mind such as insanity, somnambulism, hallucination etc. But they are not introduced as the origin of deeds of dramatic importance. Bradley illustrates his point with examples from *Macbeth* (Sleep walking scene and the dagger scene etc.) *King Lear* and *Hamlet* (the insanity of Lear and Ophilia) Shakespeare also introduces the supernatural into some of his tragedies, such as ghosts and witches who have supernatural knowledge. The supernatural is always placed in the closest relation with character, yet its influence is never of a compulsive kind. These forces do not originate anything. They merely confirm what is already present in the hero's mind. Shakespeare also allows to 'chance' or 'accident' an appreciable influence at some point in action. Since any large admission of chance into the tragic sequence would weaken and destroy the causal relation between character, deed and catastrophe, Shakespeare uses them sparingly.

Bradley next dwells on an important feature, namely 'conflict', in the tragic plays of Shakespeare. The tragic action is a conflict - ordinarily between two persons of whom the hero is one; sometimes between two parties or groups in which the hero is the leading figure; or again between two kinds of passions or ideas animating such persons or groups. Conflict, both external and internal, is the crux of a Shakespearian tragedy. His tragic heroes are torn asunder between alternatives and their hearts are in a state of excruciating agony. The soul of the hero is at war with himself. In *Macbeth*, the external conflict is between the treasonous ambition of Macbeth and patriotism and loyalty of Malcolm and Macduff; the inner conflict is between the vaulting ambition of Macbeth and his conscience. In *King Lear* there are two distinct groups of characters opposing each other under the banner of Good and Evil, constituting the external conflict. But the inner conflict is to be seen in the mind of Lear alone. In *Hamlet*, Hamlet taking up arms against his uncle, Polonius and Leatres, is the external conflict while his struggle between the desire for revenge and the moral scruples constitute the inner conflict. It is also observed that the tragic trait in a Shakespearean tragic hero is a marked one - sidedness, a predisposition in some particular direction; a total

incapacity in certain circumstances of resisting the force drawing him in that direction. He shows a fatal tendency to identify the whole thing with one interest, object, passion or habit of mind. The tragic hero finds himself in just those circumstances in which his tragic trait is fatal to him. His action or omission, is the error which combined with other causes brings on him ruin.

Shakespeare's tragic hero is generally 'good' and hence wins our sympathy at once in his error. But the hero should have so much of greatness that in his error and fall, we are conscious of the possibilities of human nature. Hence a Shakespearean tragedy is never depressing. Man's lot may be heart rending and mysterious but it is never contemptible.

The essential tragic impression is one of waste. Power, intelligence, life and glory which astound us, seem to be perishing, devouring one another and destroying themselves accompanied by terrific pain and anguish. Tragedy makes us realize forcefully, the worth of that which is wasted and we can only marvel at the mystery of life. The ultimate power in the tragic world is neither the power of a moral world nor of fate wholly. It is a combination of several aspects of both as otherwise the spectacle of suffering and waste would not seem fearful and mysterious and it would leave us desperate and rebellious.

In a Shakespearean tragedy the hero is fated to destruction and death. Though he is not free from faults, still he is not the sole or sufficient cause for his destruction (for example, Brutus meant well and killed his friend Caesar to save democracy in Rome. But the ultimate result of his efforts is civil war in Rome and death of many of his friends; Hamlet hesitates to take revenge on his uncle but in the end kills many innocent people whom he had never intended to harm) Man seems therefore helpless before a mighty superior force whom we may name as 'Fate'. But it is not the 'Fate' of Greek drama where it stands for the will of gods and expressed itself in spiteful ways, bringing death on the concerned individual. In Shakespeare, Fate is the mythological expression for the whole system or order which governs the world; and individuals, however great, form but a feeble, inconsiderable part of the order. This system, by whatever name it is called, is the ultimate power governing this world. Beside the circumstance and accidents, human action - the hero's voluntary action, is presented as the main cause of destruction. The catastrophe is the return of this action on the head of the agent the recoil of the wrong done. Though the punishment may be deserved yet we also

feel pity over the excessive suffering of the hero. There is no poetic justice in Shakespeare; still the villain is always punished. But many innocent persons are also destroyed with him (Eg. Cordelia in *King Lear*, Desdemona in *Othello* etc) Happiness and misery are never apportioned according to merit.

Destruction and death are never produced by what is good in man. But the good is always found in combination with some marked flaw or imperfection in the hero-haste, ambition, irresolution, pride, cruelty etc. and it is this evil in the comparatively innocent hero which causes the ultimate destruction. Evil seems to exist everywhere, in the mind of man and the outside world. It shows itself as something negative, weakening and destructive. Evil brings about disunity isolation and at first destroys what is good but finally annihilates itself.

Shakespeare does not justify the ways of god to man. He does not at the same time uphold that the all powerful Fate determines the course of any action. In his plays, the world is striving for perfection and in the process bringing to birth glorious good, which is able to overcome evil only at the cost of much self torture and destruction.

A.C. Bradley's main concern is to show the link between drama and poetry and what he understands by action and personages. Bradley believes that the world of a play is a world of causal law and of determined "inevitable" consequence, just like the world of reality. Bradley is influenced by the nineteenth century idea of all-pervasive causality and this gives Bradley's criticism its most distinctive quality. That is why Bradley never emphasizes "construction" in the tragedies; for him the organization of a play is in essence the same as the rational, causal order of experience. So, the discussion can be how the succession of events in play displays "a constant alternation of rises and falls of tension' or how, in a number of tragedies, one 'group of characters becomes more and more successful upto a maximum point and then progressively declines in fortune.

Bradley's main investigation is on the personages and he responds to the richness and profundity of Shakespeare's characters. Here he is at his best, often both penetrating and exhilarating. Bradley chooses Shakespeare's four weightiest plays - *Macbeth, Othello, King Lear* and *Hamlet*. He discusses the experience of those plays in a way the value of which none who are to acknowledge their greatness could totally deny, because, whatever the faults of his criticism, it does make plain Shakespeare's greatness. He discusses the substance and the structure

and the individual features of the four plays; those aspects on which he dwells, the feeling of reconciliation at the end of the tragedy, the characters of those involved in the conflict he discusses exhaustively. What he has done has never been done better and seldom well. To cite an example, in his essay on *Antony and Cleopatra* included in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, he begins with a reference to "the full analysis and illustration of the character" of Cleopatra. He writes: "Cleopatra stands in a group with Hamlet and Falstaff ... They are inexhaustible. You feel as if they were alive and you spent your whole life with them; their infinite variety could never be staled by custom; they would continue everyday to surprise, perplex and delight you. Shakespeare has bestowed on each of them his own originality, his genius. He has given it most fully to Hamlet, to whom none of the chambers of experience is shut".

Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* was at once the culmination of the kind of criticism which had started a hundred years before - that of Morgann and the great Romantics - and it was also to be for a whole generation the truest and most profound book ever written on Shakespeare. Indeed, when all deductions have been made, it probably retains that high position today with the majority of readers. Bradley is not without weaknesses, though they are mostly those of his age and not peculiar to himself. The catalogue he gives of Shakespeare's faults, for example, seems now as presumptuous as Johnson's similar list in his great Preface. He complains of the stringing together of short scenes, as in the middle part of *Antony and Cleopatra*; of the introduction of irrelevant anachronisms; of the direct addressing of the audience in soliloquies; of the excessive use of metaphor and bombastic language; of Shakespeare's failure to distinguish between the speech of different characters; and of the use of 'gnomic' passages. There is not one of these accusations which would be supported by a competent modern critic, at least without many qualifications. And this fact is not, of course, due to the superiority of modern critics, but rather to the fact that the conventions of the Elizabethan stage are now better understood and appreciated.

Bradley's avowed object was to examine each play more or less as if he were an actor who had to study all the parts. This - and the example of Coleridge and Hazlitt - led him to devote two-thirds of his space to a consideration of the characters of the plays. It is not quite fair to say that he substituted an interest in psychology for the dramatic interest, for he was well aware that "the

psychological point of view is not the equivalent of the tragic"; but it may be said fairly enough that he was sometimes led to consider the characters as real people rather than as imaginary characters in a drama. His discussion of what Cordelia would have done in Desdemona's place, his musings on the childhood of Cordelia, and the notorious note on "How many children had lady Macbeth?" are examples of Bradley's weaker side. The frequent accusation that is made against him that he read into the plays subtleties that would have astonished their author is seldom true. His interpretations of the chief characters, developed as many of them are from those of previous critics, especially from Coleridge, have remained the standard. We may feel, with Lily Campbell, that he ignores the Elizabethan acceptance of certain "abnormal states of mind as resulting from the unchecked domination of passion over reason". We may think that he passes too lightly over Hamlet's faults; that he makes too little of Iago's motives and that he credits to Macbeth's character the poetical genius of his creator. But when all is said the main characters of the great tragedies have never before or since been analysed so brilliantly or so convincingly; we diverge from him, as we often must, at our peril. His other Shakespearian essays in *Oxford Lectures* and *A Miscellany* possess the same qualities, though, he perhaps sentimentalizes the rejection of Falstaff and fails to appreciate the wonderful constructive power displayed in *Antony and Cleopatra.*

G.K. Hunter is of the view that Bradley's book on Shakespearean Tragedy paved the way for the absorption of Shakespeare into the higher educational system, long dominated by the 'Great syllabus of classics and philosophy. Bradley is accepted as a great Shakespeare critic who inspired not only agreements but also reactions.

Nearly all recent critics have been influenced by Bradley in one way or another, not least when they have reacted against his methods. F.R.Leavis accused Bradley of reading Shakespeare's poetic drama as if it were a psychological novel written in dramatic form and draped in poetry. He considers him to be 'a very potent and mischievous influence . E.E. Stoll and LL. Shucking express early their disagreement with Bradley's method of understanding Shakespeare through an analysis of his characters. Both insist on the need to see Shakespeare in the context of the life and literature of the age. This they thought would save Shakespeare from a "subjective interpretation". L.C. Knights attacks Bradley for

his failure to see the characters as part of the total design of a dramatic poem, and Lily B. Campbell, for his unwillingness to admit into a theory of tragedy those elements of fate and the supernatural which were also part of Shakespeare's design.

Yet Bradley has many disciples. Following Bradleian method John Palmer in his *Political characters and Comic characters of Shakespeare* (1945-46), Agnes Mure Mackenzie in her *The Women in Shakespeare's Plays* (1924) and H.B.Charlton in his *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1948), are mainly concerned with analysis of character.

For long Bradley was condemned for what later generations assumed he stood for; in fact he stood for nothing except the right reading of Shakespeare. Now Bradley is read on account of what he said and criticism is so much the richer. What he said is not necessarily true or even more true than what many other critics have said, but it was the product of a sensitive, well-educated, honest mind; it is the communication of reading of Shakespeare, conditioned by a vivid and intent imagination; subjected equally and simultaneously to a 'process of comparison and analysis'. The more writings of this kind on Shakespeare that are accessible the better it is for the true understanding of Shakespeare; it is as one among the not very many such readings that Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* makes its best claim to serious consideration.

10.9 G. WILSON KNIGHT

Twentieth century Shakespearean criticism can be grouped under four main heads: Textual criticism, Theatrical criticism, Historical or Realistic criticism and Symbolical criticism. The textual critics are essentially scholars rather than critics and interpreters. They examined minutely old texts and manuscripts, scrutinised letters and other relevant documents. They strove hard to set the foundation of Shakespeare's texts. To this group belonged critics like A.W.Pollard, W.W. Greg, Dover Wilson, R.W. Chambers, Peter Alexander and Alice Walker. ,

The theatrical or dramatic critics regard Shakespeare not as a poet or philosopher but as a playwright essentially, who wrote his plays for the stage. They concentrate on Shakespeare's stage, the conditions under which a play was written and the taste of the audience which determined the shape of the drama,

Henry Irving initiated and Herbert Beerbohm Tree after him, produced 'realistic' colourful Shakespeare plays. Harley Granville Barker, who was himself an actor, playwright and producer, has written the *Preface to Shakespeare*, which is a land mark in the history of theatrical criticism. His work has helped staging of Shakespeare under modern conditions. He encouraged the performance of previously neglected play such as *Love's Labours Lost.* What he had done on the stage was given a theatrical interpretation in his dramatic criticism. Other critics of this group are G.C.D. Odell and Arthur Colby Sprague, Marvin Rosenberg, John Russel Brown and Maynard Mack.

The historical or realistic critics, like the theatrical critics, study the Elizabethan background and stage conventions but they are less romantic than the theatrical critics. They are historical in the sense that they have studied minutely the history of the Elizabethan conventions; they are realistic in the sense that they are not romantic or imaginative in their approach. E.E. Stoll and L.L. Schucking are two representatives of this school. Both expressed their disagreement with Bradley's method of understanding Shakespeare, through an analysis of his characters. They insisted on the need to see Shakespeare in the context of the life and literature of his age thus giving importance to historical factors also. This they thought, would save Shakespeare from a "subjective interpretation". Their chief aim was to revive the good sense of the eighteenth century Neo-Classicists. Other realist critics who were influenced by Stoll and Shucking are W.J. Lawrence, G.F. Reynolds, A.H. Thorndike, J.Q. Adams, Alfred Harbage, G.P. Baker, Muriel, Bradbrook and S.L. Bethell.

Later critics have reacted against such 'realist' approaches by including Freudian and Post-Freudian psychological research in their Shakespearian investigation, thus bringing in once again the 'subjective' on 'personal' point of view. Thus, the psychological school of criticism arose out of such investigation. Freud himself has written several papers on Shakespeare Dr. Ernest Jones, Ella F. Sharpe and Hardincraig have also done psychological study of Shakespeare.

Attention to Shakespeare's portrayal of character became unfashionable with the increasing emphasis on verbal criticism. The emergence round about 1930, of a school of criticism much concerned with verbal analysis had a major effect on Shakespeare criticism. The work of I.A.Richards looms behind the movement though his contribution to Shakespearean side is very little. L.C.

Knights essay "How many children had Lady Macbeth?" (1933) attacks the Bradlein approach and Knights propounds the view that a Shakespeare play is a dramatic poem. The symbolic criticism of Shakespeare is based on the study of imagery in the plays. William White can be regarded as a pioneer in the field, for he has made an intensive study of symbols and images in *A Specimen of a Commentary*. Dowden has referred to the iterative imagery of blood in *Macbeth*. Bradley too refers to the animal imagery in *King Lear,* which he believes intensifies the bestial atmosphere of the play. E.E. Kellett has studied imagery lying behind the puns. Una Ellis - Fermor in her *Some Recent Researches in Shakespeare's Imagery* refers to some symbolic critics who remain in obscurity, namely, T. Hilding Svatengren, Henry W. Wells, Stephen J. Brown and Elizabeth Holmes.

The symbolical school of criticism has branched off into many directions. This type of criticism is by and large subjective, but the subjectivity varies in degree. For example, Caroline Spurgeon has done an elaborate cataloguing of imagery; but G. Wilson Knight has been more interpretative and so more subjective. The symbolic critics are not very much interested in language. They find the significance of the Shakespearean plays in certain symbols, images, words and metaphors that are behind the plot and character. G. Wilson Knight and L.C. Knights have, of course, not completely eliminated character study from their investigation. To the symbolist critics, Shakespeare is primarily a poet and his plays are different types of poetic patterns. These critics affirm that poetry subordinates all the roles to a greater whole, a greater unity - in the first place a unity of language. Yeats was the first in the modern period to recognize the distinctive nature and deeper potentiality of poetic drama: "In poetic drama there is, it is held, an antithesis between character and lyric poetry yet when we go back a few centuries and enter the great periods of drama, character grows less and sometimes disappears and there is much lyric feeling."

Prof. Wilson Knight's contribution to Shakespearean investigation must be regarded as one of the most original of our time. Knight wrote several volumes of essays on Shakespeare. His first published essay, *Myth and Miracle: An Essay on the Symbolism of Shakespeare*, clearly states that (i) Shakespeare's final plays are "the culmination of a series which starts about the middle of Shakespeare's writing life". This series has remarkable coherence and shows the progressive revelation

of the dramatists spiritual journey, his struggle with or arrival at "the questioning, the pain, the profundity and grandeur" of the mystery of human fate and how it is intuitively apprehended; (ii) the plays constitute an ordering and profound comprehension of life and the values of life and (iii) where the "language of conceptual thought fails, the plays offer a semi - mystical vision through the "poetic atmosphere" and through symbolism which integrates the basic "themes" of each play into a kind of poetic - orchestra. From this poetic unity, the ultimate vision of the play emerges and the artist expresses a direct vision of the significance of life. Knight says that these are most evident in Shakespeare's final plays, especially *The Tempest.* Colin Still's book, *Shakespeare's Mystery Play: A Study of the Tempest* further confirmed his own view that *The Tempest* is a mystical work.

Knight elucidates his approach to Shakespeare's plays more fully in his first volume of essays *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearian Tragedy.* Originally published in 1930, it is a classic of modern Shakespeare criticism that prove both enlightening and innovative. In the Prefatory Note to the enlarged edition of this volume, he states that his criticism of character analysis approach was intended to loosen, to render flexible and fluid, what had become petrified. He felt that A.C. Bradley had pushed 'Character analysis' to an unnecessary extreme. His aim therefore is to apply to Shakespeare's work in general, the methods already applied by Bradley to certain outstanding plays".

He sees an analogy to his approach in modern physics: "the belief in rigid particles with predictable motions have been replaced by concepts of form, pattern and symmetry .... for 'particles put 'characters' and we have a clear Shakespearian analogy". He continues further, to speak of his approach to Shakespeare as similar to Einstein's theory:

"Einstein's relativity theory served to shift emphasis from individual entities to their observable 'relationships. Just as in my early essays on Hamlet, I tried ..... to see the hero not merely as an isolated 'character' rigidly conceived, but in direct and living relation to his own dramatic environment...... it is precisely such a 'relationship' that lies regularly behind Shakespeare's use of symbolism as distinct from persons". Knight says that trends in modern physics run parallel with trends in other branches of knowledge and that they are "part of a general movement of the twentieth century mind. In the opening essay of this volume "On

the principles of Shakespeare Interpretation," Knight outlines the chief hindrances in understanding and suggests the path towards sound interpretation.

Knight calls his approach "interpretation" and distinguishes it from "criticism". "Criticism" to me suggests a certain process of deliberately objectifying the work under consideration ..... 'Interpretation', on the contrary tends to merge into the work it analyses..... criticism is active and looks ahead....interpretation is passive, and looks back.......criticism is a judgement of vision; interpretation, a reconstruction of vision". Knight observes that the most famous Shakespeare commentators took the interpretative approach: "Coleridge, repelled by one of the horrors in *King Lear*, admitted that the author's judgement..... was here probably superior to his own and he was right." That is the interpretative approach. Hazlitt and A. C. Bradley both developed that approach: their work is primarily interpretative.

Knight argues that most Shakespeare commentary is too concerned with temporal factors, sequential factors and does not pay enough attention to spatial factors, to atmosphere. "A Shakespearean tragedy is set spatially as well as temporally in the mind. By this I mean that there are throughout the playa set of correspondences which relate to each other independently of the time sequence which is the story: such are the death-theme in *Hamlet* the nightmare evil of *Macbeth*......This I have sometimes called the play's 'atmosphere'. The spatial element, the atmosphere, may be created unconsciously by the poet, and may be perceived unconsciously by the reader: "with the poet, as with the reader, the time - sequence will be uppermost in consciousness, the pervading atmosphere or static background tending to be unconsciously apprehended or created, a half - realized significance, a vague, all-inclusive deity of the dramatic universe". But if the time sequence is upper most for most readers, Knight takes the opposite approach. He focuses on the atmosphere. According to him, atmosphere is 'pure Shakespeare', whereas the time - sequence, the plot is often borrowed from earlier writers (Plutarch, Holinshed etc). Knight thinks that a study of Shakespeare's sources is of little use since these sources do not shape the atmosphere, the spatial elements.

One of Knight's chief innovations is to de-emphasize character. He argues that character is merely a role that we play, not our true nature. Shakespeare goes deeper than character, and depicts our true self, our fundamental nature. According to Knight, Shakespeare removes the mask of the role - player, and goes

deeper than character, deeper than personality and describes the fundamental drives that all people share.

Knight avoids using the term "character" because, "it is impossible to use the term without any tinge of a morality which blurs vision. The term, which in ordinary speech often denotes the degree of moral control exercised by the individual over his instinctive passions, is altogether unsuited to those persons of poetic drama whose life consists largely of passion unveiled. *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are created in a soul - dimension of primal feeling, of which in real life we may be only partly conscious or may be urged to control by a sense of right and wrong". "Interpretation" says Knight, "must be metaphysical rather than ethical".

Knight focuses on the atmosphere, the theme, the "burning central core" of the play, rather than on plot - the time sequence. According to him, once we grasp this central core, this theme, then all the incidents make sense. The incidents "relate primarily, not directly to each other, nor to the normal appearance of human life, but to this central reality alone".

Knight points out how false criticism sets in when the commentator discusses Shakespeare's work without the requisite emotional sympathy and agility of intellect. Whatever elements lend themselves to analysis on the analogy of actual life is selected, uprooted, distorted, praised or blamed according to the critics own life experiences, creating 'characters', searching for 'causes' and motives for their actions, even executing some strange transference or substitution such as ... what would Lady Macbeth have done - this or that in Cordelia's position? etc, instead of recapturing for analysis his own original experience, purely with a dramatic or artistic reality. The commentator, Knight thinks, often passes over the true poetic realities when he begins to criticize, leaving untouched the "rich gems of Shakespeare's poetic symbolism". Knight also tries to show how the psychological analysis and the realistic criticism are defective.

Another important observation of Knight on Shakespearean interpretation is that neither a sound knowledge of the stage nor the special theatrical technique of Shakespeare's play will render up its imaginative secret. They cannot explain why the finest things - "the fascination of *Hamlet*, the rich music of *Othello*, the gripping evil of *Macbeth*, the pathos of *King Lear* and the gigantic architecture of *Timon of Athens* came to birth". Only a true philosophic and imaginative interpretation will aim at cutting below the surface, to reveal the burning core of

mental or spiritual reality. It is from this 'central core' that each play derives its nature and meaning.

Knight lays down four main principles of interpretation: first, that we should "regard each play as a visionary unit, bound to obey none but its own self imposed laws"; secondly, that we should be prepared "to relate any given incident or speech either to the time sequence of story or the peculiar atmosphere, intellectual or imaginative, which binds the play"; we should not look for perfect verisimilitude to life, but rather see each play as an expanded metaphor; thirdly, we should analyse the use and meaning of direct poetic symbolism"; and fourthly, we should relate each play to its place in the significant sequence of the plays written between 1599 and 1611. Knight's method has been fruitful though the particular applications of it are not always satisfying. Yet, "Knight at least demonstrates that Shakespeare used tempest and music as symbols of discord and concord, hatred and love".

In *The Wheel of Fire* Knight draws our attention to the theme of hate and evil in some of Shakespeare's plays. He believes that there is a pattern in these plays. Othello is a typical Shakespeare tragedy and follows the pattern. "The play turns on this theme: the cynical intellect pitted against a lovable humanity transfigured by qualities of heroism and grace. Iago does not believe in love, and thinks that love between Othello and Desdemona cannot last; he plots to destroy this love. "Iago, himself a kind of devil, insidiously eats his way into this world of romance, chivalry, nobility". *Timon of Athens* also follows this pattern.

"The theme of *Timon of Athens* is closely connected with that of *Othello*....In both plays, we have a protagonist compact of generosity, trust, nobility .... At the crisis, each swerves from passionate love to its opposite with a similar finality. The Iago character in *Timon of Athens,* is according to Knight the cynical philosopher Apemantus. *King Lear* also follows the Shakespearean Pattern. "The plot of *King Lear* is fundamentally, the plot of *Timon of Athens* and *Othello*. Here Lear, Cordelia and Edmund......replace Othello Desdemona, Iago........ In each of these plays we see the same three figures recurring. They are representative of (i) noble mankind, (ii) the supreme value of spiritual love, and (iii) the cynic". A similar structure is found in *Tempest,* where "the three figures are seen to be three modes of the poet's mind: here Prospero has mastered and controls, both Ariel and Caliban ". The case of Hamlet is somewhat similar to

this. Hamlet is both noble hero and cruel cynic. He is cruel to both Ophelia and his mother, and he eagerly kills Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. "Hamlet thus takes a devilish joy in cruelty towards the end of the play: he is like Iago...... Hamlet is both hero and villain in his own drama". Hamlet's mind wavers, Knight says "between the principle of good, which is love, and that of evil, which is loathing and cruelty". Hamlet is both light and shadow, both positive and negative and thus he is closer to real people than other Shakespeare characters. Knight frequently mentions the 'hate - theme', which is turbulent throughout most of these plays: an especial mode of criticism toward love, disgust at the physical body, and dismay at the thought of death; a revulsion from human life caused by a clear sight of its limitation - more especially limitations imposed by time". Knight argues that Hamlet is the first of Shakespeare's plays to express the hate - theme, to express "love cynicism and death horror". Many of Shakespeare's later plays elaborate themes first expressed in *Hamlet*.

According to Knight, *Macbeth* does not fit into this pattern, does not exemplify the 'hate - theme'. *Macbeth* exemplifies the theme of evil, what Knight calls "nightmare evil". Knight's interpretation of *Macbeth* is perhaps his most successful exercise; for it not only illustrates his method, but helps us to see the play as 'one swift act of the poet's mind'.

Knight argues that Shakespeare's tragedies, however permeated by Hate, Evil etc, usually end on a positive note, and usually are somewhat affirmative. For example, "the beauties of the Othello world are not finally disintegrated: they make a swan like end fading into music. Knight finds that "the optimism of Shakespearean tragedy is, irrational but yet it is potent ..... It is not nihilistic, but .... philosophic and mystic."

In addition to his essay "Shakespeare and Tolstoy", Knight has written an essay that discusses Tolstoy's criticism of Shakespeare. Tolstoy was a harsh critic of Shakespeare. He describes Shakespeare's works as "beneath criticism, insignificant empty and immoral". The reason for such an attitude may be because Tolstoy was a rational thinker while Shakespeare had a penchant for the irrational, for the occult and the mystical. As Knight puts it, "Tolstoy ..... suffered from clear thinking". Knight takes up some of Tolstoy's charges, admits them to be right and soon proves that those very charges are the merits in Shakespeare. The charge that Shakespeare's characters lack clear motives is met by Knight who regards

vagueness of motivation as a merit not as a weakness. He writes: "Motive is always vague, a complex woven of conscious desire semi-conscious promptings, opportunity, and in addition, certain unknown quantities which any analysis will falsify". To Tolstoy's comment that Hamlet has "no character at all", Knight's argument is that it is precisely Hamlet's lack of character that makes Hamlet Shakespeare's greatest creation. Hamlet, Knight says "expresses many impulses, good and evil, and thus is one of Shakespeare's most universal single creations ..... Hamlet is "like a real person with a real person's potentiality for all things ..... Hamlet is universal. In him we recognize ourselves, not our acquaintances. Possessing all characters, he possesses none".

Wilson Knight's *The Imperial Theme: Further interpretations of Shakespeare* (1931) is another volume of essays. The greater part of this volume is devoted to an exhaustive study of the Roman Tragedies - *Julius Caeser, Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* It also contains Knight's most complete interpretation of *Macbeth.* Numerous other studies of Shakespeare includes *The Shakespearean Tempest* 1932; *The Crown of Life: Essay in the Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (1944); *The Mutual Flame: On Shakespeare's Sonnets and "The Phoenix and the Turtle"* (1955); *The Sovereign Flower: On Shakespeare as the poet of Royalism* (1958) and *Shakespeare's Dramatic Challenge* (1977).

Apart from his distinguished academic career, Knight has directed and acted in the great tragedies at Hart House Theatre, Toronto between 1931 and 1940; at the University of Leeds and the Westminster Theatre, London. He was thus prepared to pursue his theories on the stage itself. He recognized, both in writing and performance, the status of *Timon of Athens* as one of the central dramatic statements of Shakespeare's career finding in Timon 'promethean radiations'. He has also written books on the production of Shakespeare. *Principles of Shakespearian Production*, appeared in 1936 and was an apt complement to his previous manifestoes for Shakespeare criticism. He insisted that the director interpret the elusive 'spatial and temporal' sense of a Shakespeare play by the use of 'a properly conventionalized stage area' which would 'fuse' the mixture of particular and universal qualities found in Shakespeare's peculiar kind of poetic drama. He repeats, that Shakespeare's symbolic meaning must be read with 'a stage-eye': we should mend our partial understanding of Shakespeare's complexities and seek the total experience, by allowing the theatre to do its own

kind of work upon us as 'drama'. This does not refer to the reconstruction of Elizabethan play houses or following the exact text, but the grand purpose was to reveal in a new medium the central idea of the original'. Alfred Harbage declared in 1955 that Knight might 'stand as spokesman for the interpreter producer' and found him a truly formidable influence.

Knight's second book on Shakespeare production, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Challenges* discusses the relation of poetry and dramatic 'action' to the persons of Shakespeare's tragedies, and is particularly concerned to show how, in the poetry considered, the heroes are found to rise rather than fall. This is the theme of Knight's book, which is a dramatic recital as presented in England, Wales, and at many universities in Canada and U.S.A. The book is a discussion study of the issues involved, with the addition of a description and part of the text, of the recital script.

Throughout there is a running commentary on the speaking and acting of Shakespeare and advice is offered which should help both actors and students to give full blooded and assured performances. There is an especial emphasis on what might be called 'poetic acting'. Every page serves to counter the modern tendency to reduce Shakespeare to the level of twentieth century 'commonsense'. We are invited to raise our consciousness and dramatic performance to the level of a true understanding. This is the 'challenge' indicated by the title.

The strongest arguments for the validity of Knight's method is the fact that he has genuinely increased our understanding of certain plays which had baffled critics who had approached them by earlier methods. After his essays on *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida* no serious critic is likely to write off those plays as failures, even though they may not agree with Knight's interpretation. He has done more than anyone else to justify the methods employed by Shakespeare in the plays of the final period, and the 'transcendental humanism' he discovers in *Antony and Cleopatra* would seem to be closer to Shakespeare's conception than 'the world ill lost' of Henry Morley and Quiller-Couch. The best example of his method in *The Wheel of Fire* is the essay on *Measure for Measure*. It has been treated as a cynical and unpleasant play; the happy ending has been attributed to Shakespeare making concessions to the groundlings; the Duke has been blamed for irresponsible conduct; and the pardoning of Angelo has been variously

lamented. Knight, by interpreting the play by means of the gospels and by treating it as a dramatic parable has ... immeasurably increased our understanding of it.

Another example of Knight's positive qualities is afforded by his chapter on *The Winter's Tale in The Crown of Life*, which brings out the poetic unity of the play and contains a satisfying defence of the 'resurrection' of Hermione. On the other hand, Knight's interpretation of *Hamlet*, does not altogether correspond with the impression we get of the play from reading or performance and it is difficult to agree with his accounts of Macbeth's development, especially the one given in the essay, *Christ and Nietzsche* (1948).

There are certain obstacles to the enjoyment of Knight's books. His originality sometimes turns to eccentricity; he is not always alive to aesthetic values; he claims the right to find meanings in the play which could hardly have occurred to the poet; and though he formally allows the possibility of other kinds of criticism, he believes in the subordination of scholarship to interpretation. Wilson Knight's work on Shakespeare frequently bordered on mysticism and yet, in the end he may prove to be the one great critic of the century who pointed the way for post-war directors. The effect of his criticism was all pervasive during and after the thirties. After reading him, even a pragmatic Shakespearian like Dover Wilson could say that 'the true meaning of dramatic poetry is only just beginning to be revealed to us' and spoke of the plays as 'dramatic symphonies'. For all the obscurity of Knight's thinking, its fever was infectious, and few judges would now deny him his place as the most disturbing and seductive critic of recent years. For those who searched for a pattern for the understanding of Shakespeare, he supplied one. The seamless structure of themes, symphonically elaborated, the over-all unity to which all elements are subordinated; the idea of a tonality or atmosphere pervading a whole drama; the idea of the relationship between single dramas; the idea that the characters are, as it were constellated, that they 'refer' to each other - in a word, the organic form: these concepts were effectively brought back into English Shakespeare criticism by Prof. G. Wilson Knight.

Stanley Wills considers Knight the major Shakespeare critic after Bradley. As a 'verbal critic' he examines the plays as "expanded metaphors" interpreting in the process the underlying themes and symbols. His observations on the symbolical significance of storm and music in Shakespeare are profoundly

revealing. However his over subtle analysis and too personal approach sometimes leads to obscurity.

The interpretative criticism of G. Wilson Knight had aroused violent antipathies since the time of its appearance, but it had also had a direct or indirect influence on other critics, including some of the best. His straightforward, often incredibly careful tracing out of image patterns had won the approval, at least for a while, of Eliot and Leavis, and had considerable influence on such critics as L.C. Knights, R.B. Heilman (at a later date) and Knight's younger Canadian friend, Northrop Frye. But by the mid 1930's it was clear that Knight had been moving in a direction few others could take seriously.

10.10 Questions

1. Write an essay on Johnson's criticism of Shakespeare.
2. Summarize briefly A.C.Bradley's views on Shakespearean tragedy.
3 Write an essay on G. Wilson Knight's interpretative criticism of Shakespeare's plays.

10.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions

1. Dryden 2. Samuel Johnson 3. Preface 4. S.T.Coleridge
5. portrayal of character 6. Internal and External Conflict

10.12 Further Reading

Bloom, Edward E., ed. *Shakespeare, 1564-1964: A Collection of Modern Essays By Various Hands.*

Eastman, Arthur. *A Short History of Shakespearean Criticism.*

Siegel, Paul N. ed. *His Infinite Variety: Major Shakespearean Criticism Since Johnson.*

B.A. ENGLISH – THIRD YEAR – PAPER VII

SHAKESPEARE- SYLLABUS

Detailed : 1. Othello

2. Twelfth Night

Non-Detailed : 1. Richard II

2. The Tempest

General Shakespeare

- Elizabethan Stage, Audience
- Romantic Comedies, History Plays, Tragedies, Final Plays
- Plot Construction, Use of Songs, Soliloquies, Supernatural Elements
- Fools
- Shakespeare as a Sonneteer
- Contribution to Shakespearean Criticism by Johnson, A.C.Bradley, G.Wilson Knight

(j) But when in other habits you are seen,
Orsino's mistress, and his fancy's queen.

2. **Answer ONE of the following questions** (1 x 15 = 15)

(a) "Of all Shakespeare's tragedies, *Othello* is the most painfully exciting and the most terrible." Substantiate.

(b) Describe Othello's jealousy and his motivation for killing Desdemona.

(c) Discuss *Othello* as a domestic tragedy.

3. **Answer ONE of the following questions:** (1 x 15 = 15)

(a) Analyse *Twelfth Night* as a typical Shakespearean comedy.

(b) Discuss the theme of self-love in *Twelfth Night.*

(c) Comment on the use of disguise in *Twelfth Night.*

SECTION B - (50 marks)

4. **Answer ONE of the following questions:** (1 x 15 = 15)

(a) Consider *Richard II* as a history play.

(b) Write a note on the role of women in *Richard II.*

(c) Discuss the significance of the "Garden scnene" ~~in~~ *Richard II.*

5. **Answer ONE of the following questions**: (1 x 15 = 15)

(a) "*The Tempest* is a study in sin and redemption". Discuss.

(b) Analyse how Prospero's magic differs from that of Sycorax in *The Tempest.*

(c) Discuss *The Temptest* as a purely romantic drama.

6. **Answer TWO of the following questions**: (2 x 10 = 20)

(a) What are the characteristics of Shakespeare's Romantic comedies?

(b) Analyse the function of music in Shakespeare's plays.

(c) Comment on the treatment of Time in Shakespeare's sonnets.

(d) Account fot the popularity of Fools in Shakespeare's plays

(e) Analyse the views of A.C.Bradley on Shakespeare's tragedy.